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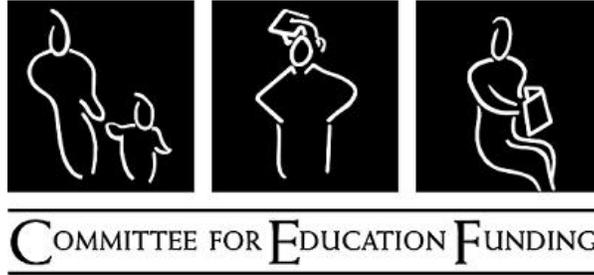
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**Joel Packer**,  
Executive Director  
Committee for Education Funding



July 28, 2011

Dear Representative:

The Committee for Education Funding (CEF), a coalition of more than 85 education associations and institutions from preschool to postgraduate education, is writing to express our views on the Budget Control Act of 2011 (the House amendment to S. 627).

While CEF is pleased that the bill provides an additional \$17 billion for Pell grants over the next two years, which will strengthen the program and close most of the gap needed to maintain the \$5,550 maximum award, we have serious concerns about other provisions in the bill that lead us to oppose it.

While we appreciate the additional Pell grant funding, CEF does not support the elimination of the in-school interest exemption for graduate and professional students and the prohibition of financial incentives to students who repay their loans on a timely basis. Both of these provisions will increase the cost of loan repayment and thus the cost of college attendance. In addition, the bill fails to completely close the Pell shortfall, while diverting \$4.6 billion from student loans to deficit reduction.

We also cannot support the requirement for an additional \$1.8 trillion in deficit reduction by the end of the year, which will likely result in deeper cuts to education and children's programs. Finally, the discretionary caps established in the bill, while \$24 billion higher than those set in the House-passed Budget Resolution, fail to protect domestic programs from serious cuts since the bill carves out a range of funding for defense spending, leaving the level of domestic funding at risk. In addition, the aggregate cap for FY 12 is lower than the FY 11 CR level, which resulted in a \$1.25 billion cut to education programs (not counting Pell grants).

Students, schools and colleges are struggling with significant state and local budget cuts that have caused large numbers of educator layoffs and major cuts and eliminations in a range of critical education programs. In the past two years, local governments have eliminated 207,000 educator jobs. A recent report from the Center on Education Policy found that "the already grim situation for school funding is expected to worsen in the coming school year with a large majority of all school districts, about 70 percent, experiencing funding cuts in school year 2010-11 and an even greater proportion of districts, about 84 percent, anticipating funding cuts in the upcoming school year."

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## CEF Letter on the Budget Control Act

Based on data from 49 states compiled by AASCU, 35 states saw declining state appropriations for public four-year universities compared to fiscal year 2011, contrasted with just eight that received increased funds. Six states had flat funding. Low-income college students continue to lose access to critical supportive services and financial aid offerings that are vital to degree attainment.

While action needs to be taken to address our nation's debt, this bill places an undue burden on students and our education system by not using a balanced approach to deficit reduction since virtually all of the savings come from discretionary appropriations. As a result it is likely that education programs will face cuts under the initial \$840 billion reduction in appropriated funds proposed in the amendment,

CEF believes education programs deserve additional investments, not cuts, in order to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps and increase high school graduation, postsecondary education attendance and college completion rates. Education investments are a critical element in improving our nation's global competitiveness and economic future.

Sincerely,



Abigail Evans  
President



Joel Packer  
Executive Director