

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, July 28, 2005

Contact: Nicole Barry, Deputy Director
202-219-2099 • Nicole.Barry@ed.gov



**ADVISORY
COMMITTEE ON
STUDENT FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE**



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO SIMPLIFY
STUDENT AID WIN BIPARTISAN SUPPORT IN THE HOUSE**

Washington, D.C.— A one-year study mandated by Congress in January 2004, conducted by the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, has culminated in legislation that would greatly simplify student aid forms and processes for all families if implemented, according to Advisory Committee chairman Clare M. Cotton. Key recommendations from the Advisory Committee’s report, *The Student Aid Gauntlet*, received bipartisan backing from members of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce during its markup of the Higher Education Act last Thursday. These recommendations were included in an amendment offered by Reps. Howard P. “Buck” McKeon (R-CA), Tim Ryan (D-OH), and John F. Tierney (D-MA) that was agreed to by a unanimous voice vote.

“Two years ago I began working with Chairman Boehner and Congressman Emanuel to direct the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance...with a study [and] Mr. Ryan came up with an amendment to implement much of that study,” said Rep. McKeon, chairman of the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness. “It conforms with the other things we’re trying to do to make things easier and better for students so that we increase access.”

“I want to thank [Rep. McKeon] and Chairman Boehner for working on this,” said Rep. Tierney. “I want to thank publicly Clare Cotton and all the members of the Advisory Committee who did a great deal of work. It’s nice to see a product where Congress actually requests a study and the study comes back and we’re at some point able to convert that into good, positive legislation. It will help hopefully a significant number of families.”

Congress charged the Advisory Committee to conduct the short-turnaround study in order to identify ways in the current reauthorization to streamline the financial aid system and make it easier, more responsive, and fairer for students and families. Eight of the report’s ten recommendations were cost-neutral, meeting the study’s major challenge of identifying improvements that did not require increases in program costs.

According to Judith N. Flink, Advisory Committee vice chairperson, this important piece of legislation approved by the full committee would implement the majority of the Advisory Committee’s cost-neutral recommendations, including creating a paper “EZ FAFSA” and expanding eligibility for simplified financial aid forms for low-income students, and would improve the financial aid process for all families.

The Advisory Committee will continue to provide assistance to Congress as student aid simplification is revisited by the full House of Representatives during debate on the Higher Education Act reauthorization early this fall. Advisory Committee recommendations have also garnered bipartisan support in the Senate. Chairman Enzi has indicated that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will introduce its HEA reauthorization bill and bring it before the full Senate in September.

For additional information about HEA reauthorization, the Simplification Study, or the Advisory Committee’s reauthorization recommendations, please contact the Advisory Committee’s deputy director, Nicole A. Barry, or assistant director, Erin Renner, at 202-219-2099.

80 F Street N.W., Suite 413, Washington, D.C. 20202-7582 • Tel: 202/219-2099 • Fax: 202/219-3032

An independent committee created by Congress to advise on higher education and student aid policy