



## Business-Higher Education Forum

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August 2, 2006

The Honorable Rush Holt  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1019 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Holt:

On behalf of the Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF) and its more than 70 members from leading U.S. corporations, higher education institutions, and foundations, I am writing to thank you for your leadership in introducing H.R. 5139, the STEM Scholarship Database Act.

To maintain our nation's ability to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century global economy more students need to pursue science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees, particularly women and undergraduate minorities. This issue is of great concern to BHEF and its individual members.

BHEF is part of the 15-member "Tapping America's Potential" (TAP) coalition whose report calls for doubling the number of STEM graduates by 2015. In 2005, BHEF launched its own initiative on STEM education, "Securing America's Leadership in STEM" to identify promising strategies for strengthening the educational pipeline that leads to careers in these critical fields. One of the initiative's objectives is to expand the STEM pipeline by utilizing approaches such as early awareness and early financial aid assurance programs. These programs specifically encourage underrepresented students to persist through the K-12 and postsecondary systems. At the same time, many of BHEF's members and their organizations are actively engaged in providing financial incentives to attract students to major in STEM disciplines.

BHEF believes that the creation of a comprehensive STEM-specific financial assistance database will be a valuable resource for all students and encourage greater participation in STEM majors. In particular, it will provide women as well as underrepresented minorities with an important tool to identify and secure financial assistance. Federal and state governments, K-12 and postsecondary education, businesses, and other key stakeholders must continue to promote policies such as H.R. 5139 that focus on maintaining America's overall competitiveness.

Sincerely,

Brian Fitzgerald  
Executive Director