

Office of the President



Serving Learners

July 30, 2008

Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Chairman
HELP Committee
U.S. Senate

Honorable George Miller
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives

Honorable Mike Enzi
Ranking Member
HELP Committee
U.S. Senate

Honorable Buck McKeon
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Kennedy, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Enzi and Ranking Member McKeon:

I am writing on behalf of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) to thank you and the conferees for completing the conference negotiations for the *Higher Education Opportunity Act*. We are pleased with the improvements you have made to Title II, *Teacher Quality Enhancement*, including:

- The consolidation of the Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant program into the one partnership grant stream. This enhanced program's emphasis on the clinical dimension of educator preparation and on preparing educators to meet the learning needs of all students is the right focus for the program.
- The amendments to the accountability provisions in sections 204 and 205. These include improving the institutional pass rate reporting requirements and refocusing the eligible partnership evaluation requirements in sec. 204 on how partnerships have prepared educators for high-need fields in high-need schools.
- New programs such as the Centers of Excellence, Teach to Reach Grants and the Graduate Fellowships to Prepare Faculty in High-Need Areas at Colleges of Education. These programs will support higher education institutions in preparing a more diverse educator workforce, ensuring that teacher candidates are prepared to teaching students with disabilities, and increasing the number of faculty who prepare educators for high-need teaching fields.

I would also like to thank you for including needed amendments to the TEACH Grant program in Title IV of the bill. These amendments will provide grant recipients with the flexibility they need to carry out their service obligation and will ensure that an evaluation is carried out on the TEACH Grant program to assess its effectiveness in recruiting more teachers to the profession.

Thank you for your commitment to teacher quality and for your support of the higher education institutions that prepare over 90% of all educators. AACTE and its members look forward to participating in the new opportunities that the Higher Education Opportunity Act will provide for the educator preparation profession.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon P. Robinson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "S".

Sharon P. Robinson, Ed.D.
President and CEO