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National Association for College Admission Counseling

...guiding the way to higher education

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July 20, 2009

Committee on Education and Labor

US House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), representing, along with 23 state and regional affiliates, more than 20,000 high school counselors and college admission officers nationwide, I write to express our support for the historic investment in student assistance contained in the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009 (SAFRA).

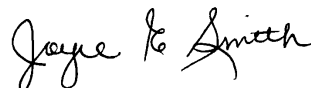
Members of NACAC support an increased federal investment in three major policy areas related to improving college access and success—college advising and counseling, college preparatory curriculum, and need-based financial aid. We support the priority that SAFRA places on the Pell grant program, as well as the assurance that, with the Appropriations Committee's continued vigilance, the grant will continue to keep pace with inflation. Further, we support the legislation's continued effort to simplify the financial aid application process.

We also appreciate the investment in access and completion through the College Access and Completion Innovation Fund. College access and success occurs across a continuum during which students encounter financial, academic, and personal obstacles to success in higher education. We believe SAFRA addresses most points along the access and success continuum, but are eager to ensure that the legislation also includes activities under this section are coordinated with high-need high schools. Involving high schools in college access activities creates efficiencies in the delivery of information to students and their families, and provides a ready forum for exchange between educators, students, peers, and families.

As students' paths to higher education become more diverse, we are encouraged by SAFRA's efforts to support multiple pathways to degrees through the Community College Initiative. We are particularly supportive of the legislation's focus on assisting with the development of transfer articulation agreements. Such agreements are labor intensive and require a significant investment of time and resources.

Thank you for considering NACAC's comments during the markup of the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009. Please have your staff contact David Hawkins, NACAC's Director of Public Policy at dhawkins@nacacnet.org with any questions regarding college access or NACAC's policy priorities.

Sincerely,



Joyce E. Smith
NACAC Chief Executive Officer