



SENATOR CLAIRE MCCASKILL FIGHTING TO IMPROVE EDUCATION FOR ALL



Supported Efforts to Keep Teachers in the Classroom. In 2010, Sen. McCaskill supported efforts to create a deficit-neutral fund to help states keep teachers in the classroom. Based on the Keep Our Educators Working Act (S. 3206), the fund provided \$10 billion for states to avoid teacher layoffs, and was fully paid for. The fund was signed into law as part of the FAA reauthorization bill in August 2010. Additionally, McCaskill voted in favor of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2009, which has been instrumental in saving and creating teacher jobs in Missouri. The Missouri state government received nearly \$921 million in assistance through the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, helping to save or create more than 8,000 elementary and secondary school jobs in Missouri. The federal funds helped enable the state government to balance its budget without having to make drastic cuts to elementary and secondary education.

Secured Additional Investment in Early Education Training. In 2008, Sen. McCaskill supported the Higher Education Opportunity Act, legislation that included funding teacher development for teachers specializing in early education. Thanks in part to McCaskill's support, this legislation was signed into law in August 2008.

Passed Loan Forgiveness for Public School Teachers. In 2008, Sen. McCaskill supported the Higher Education Opportunity Act, legislation that improved access to loan forgiveness for public school teachers with 10 years of qualifying public service. The bill also included efforts to improve teacher quality through mentoring and collaboration programs. Thanks in part to McCaskill's support, this legislation was signed into law in August 2008. In 2007, McCaskill also supported the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, which similarly strengthened loan forgiveness program for teachers serving at least ten years in public service.

Passed the Post 9/11 GI Bill to Increase Educational Opportunities for Veterans. In 2008, Sen. McCaskill cosponsored and helped to pass the Post 9/11 GI Bill, one of the most important new benefits passed for veterans in decades. The bill, which was modeled after World War II's GI Bill, provides those who have served in the military since September 11, 2001 an opportunity to pursue a higher education. The bill also gives a unique transfer option for veterans to pass the benefits to family members, including their spouses and children.

Worked to Protect Service Member Education Benefits. Sen. McCaskill has taken a leadership role in protecting service members, veterans and their families from being taken advantage of by unscrupulous educational institutions. In 2012, McCaskill joined with seven other Senators to introduce the Military and Veterans Education Protection Act (S. 2116), legislation to prevent for-profit colleges and

universities from unfairly preying on military students and veterans. Also in 2012, McCaskill joined with Sen. Jim Webb (D-VA) to introduce the Military Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2012, legislation that would establish safeguards to ensure that institutions of all types that qualify to receive GI Bill and Tuition Assistance benefits meet historical standards.

Increased the Maximum Pell Grant Award. In 2007, Sen. McCaskill supported the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, which expanded eligibility for the Pell Grant program and provided for funding to increase the maximum value of a Pell Grant by more than \$1000 in future years. With her support, this legislation was signed into law in September 2007. In 2008, McCaskill supported the Higher Education Opportunity Act, which further expanded eligibility for Pell Grants. Thanks in part to McCaskill's support, this legislation was signed into law in August 2008. In 2009, McCaskill also supported the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, which provided for a more than \$500 increase in the maximum Pell Grant award. She later supported improving the long term stability of the program when she supported the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA), as part of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, which provided for improved long-term funding to increase the maximum award for Pell Grants consistent with inflation.

Increased Federal Funding for Education for Students with Disabilities. In 2009, Sen. McCaskill voted in favor of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, legislation that increased the federal share of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding from 17.2 percent to 34.2 percent for fiscal year 2009.

Conducted Roundtables on Reforming No Child Left Behind in Missouri. In 2011, Sen. McCaskill held a series of roundtable discussions throughout Missouri to hear from educators, parents, administrators and students about the need to reform the No Child Left Behind law. McCaskill conducted a total of sixteen roundtables in rural, urban and suburban communities like Festus, O'Fallon, Warrenton, Troy, Lebanon, Springfield, Nixa, Willard, Boonville, Fayette, Hardin, Independence, Kansas City, Liberty, Platte City and Columbia. Following her trip, McCaskill sent a letter to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, the committee charged with reauthorizing the No Child Left Behind law. In her letter, McCaskill asked the lawmakers to ensure the new law makes changes in the areas of great concern to the Missourians she heard from and pledged to work with them in achieving this goal.

Hosted Student Financial Aid Forum in Missouri. In 2009, Sen. McCaskill hosted a Student Financial Aid forum in four locations throughout Missouri. The forums focused on the challenges and experiences that students, parents, high school counselors and college advisors have had in navigating the financial aid process. McCaskill held the forums in anticipation of Congress considering legislation to overhaul the student aid system.

Supports Fairness for Missouri Teachers' Pensions. Sen. McCaskill has advocated on behalf of the thousands of Missouri educators who participate in the Public School Retirement System (PSRS). In 2008, she led congressional efforts to prevent the Social Security Administration from forcing some PSRS members to participate in the Social Security system and forgo the PSRS benefits that they earned. These efforts were successful in ensuring that the vast majority of PSRS members were able to remain as full participants in that system. Additionally, since before her arrival in the Senate, she has opposed the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision. Commonly known as GPO/WEP, these provisions have a harmful impact on Missouri educators participating in the PSRS, particularly those who suffer the death of a spouse who participated in the Social Security system. Sen. McCaskill continues to work with her colleagues to see these provisions repealed in a manner that does not add to our federal deficit.