

Today, Congressman Mike Quigley (D-IL) voted in favor of H.R. 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009, which passed the U.S. House of Representatives this afternoon. As the largest investment in higher education since the GI Bill following World War II, H.R. 3221 is watershed legislation in the 111th Congress. In addition to augmenting Pell Grant funding to alleviate the financial stress of college education – a growing problem with tuition costs rising and our economy still in the shadow of recession – H.R. 3221 further invests in our community colleges and early-childhood education.

Rep. Quigley issued the following statement regarding the legislation's passage:

*"Today, I was proud to vote in favor of the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009, legislation that not only provides the largest investment in higher education since the GI Bill, but also reduces our nation's deficit. As we work to pull our economy out of recession, I cannot think of two more pertinent legislative goals."*

*"I am particularly proud to note the bill's impact on Illinois' 5th District. By increasing the maximum Pell Grant, this legislation will make \$80 million in scholarship money available to students in the 5th District (see table below). H.R. 3221 will also increase the number of 5th District students eligible for Pell Grants to 16,827 in the 2010-2011 academic year. Additionally, community colleges in Illinois will receive \$126.3 million to finance improvement projects, ensuring that our community colleges meet their community's needs. Illinois school districts will receive \$165 million to create healthier, safer, and more energy-efficient learning environments for our young children."*

*"Investing in early childhood education establishes a solid foundation upon which our young children can build, and this bill will create world-class learning environments for children of all income groups."*

*"Lastly, I laud the deficit reduction provisions in Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act. Reducing our deficit and returning to common sense fiscal policy must be a major priority as we dig our economy out of recession, and this is a step in the right fiscal direction."*

*"This bill creates unprecedented opportunity for our students, and will help put the American economy back on track. Educational enrichment, academic opportunity, deficit reduction and economic growth are the hallmarks of H.R. 3221, and I am proud to support it."*

H.R. 3221 fulfills major education policy goals, including raising the maximum Pell Grant from \$5,500 in 2010 to \$6,900 in 2019, which will lessen the debt burden with which so many students are saddled upon graduating from college. Additionally, starting in 2011, Pell Grant scholarships will be linked to match rising cost of living plus one percentage point, which increases the number of students eligible for the scholarship. H.R. 3221 also simplifies the FAFSA form, a long-needed reform.

Rep. Quigley added that equipping students to compete in the global marketplace must be a

priority for economic regeneration, and in addition to higher education investments, H.R. 3221 provides \$10 billion in funding to improve the learning environment at our nation’s community colleges, while also aligning curricula with the needs of high-wage, high-demand industries. H.R. 3221 ensures that community colleges fulfill their potential as engines for economic growth.

H.R. 3221 is fiscally-responsible legislation, meeting the House PAYGO requirement; by converting Federal Family Education Loans to direct government lending, the federal government saves \$87 billion by removing banks as middlemen in student loans. The investments in higher education, community colleges, and early childhood education are then drawn from the \$87 billion, with \$10 billion committed to reducing the deficit.

For more information on H.R. 3221, please visit the House Committee on Education and Labor website at <http://edlabor.house.gov/blog/2009/07/student-aid-and-fiscal-respons.shtml> .

