

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 456

Designating November 2023 as “National College Application Month”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 8, 2023

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. KING, and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Designating November 2023 as “National College Application Month”.

Whereas equality of opportunity for all people is one of the noblest aspirations of the United States;

Whereas data on the benefits of higher education demonstrates that, in spite of ongoing barriers to access and student success, colleges and universities can still provide pathways to economic opportunity;

Whereas the United States built a thriving middle class by funding colleges and universities to provide avenues to individual economic opportunity and shared economic growth;

Whereas higher education enhances the economic mobility of individuals, which is evidenced by—

(1) a finding by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce that the median lifetime earnings of holders of an associate degree are uniformly greater than the median lifetime earnings of holders of solely a high school diploma; and

(2) a finding by the Pew Economic Mobility Project that, for an individual born in the lowest income quintile, obtaining a 4-year degree or a higher degree is associated with—

(A) an approximately 80-percent difference in the probability of that individual earning an income outside the lowest income quintile; and

(B) a threefold difference in the probability of that individual going on to earn an income in the highest income quintile;

Whereas the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that—

(1) the unemployment rate of recent high school graduates not enrolled in college was 18.3 percent, nearly 5 times higher than the overall unemployment rate of the United States;

(2) approximately 38 percent of 2022 high school graduates did not immediately matriculate to an institution of higher education the following fall semester, about the same percent as in 2021, and a 4.2 percentage point decline since 2012 in the rate of immediate matriculation of new high school graduates to an institution of higher education;

(3) the decline described in paragraph (2) was most notable among Hispanic and male high school graduates, who faced 12 percentage point and 6 percentage point declines, respectively, from 2012 in immediate matriculation to an institution of higher education; and

(4) the unemployment rate of adults with a bachelor's degree is nearly half that of the unemployment rate of adults whose highest credential is a high school degree;

Whereas the National Student Clearinghouse reports that overall undergraduate enrollment in colleges and universities continues to decline;

Whereas the complexity of financial aid systems and rising college costs can serve as additional deterrents or barriers for students and families as they assess the viability of higher education programs as a postsecondary option;

Whereas many students struggle to identify and compare postsecondary options due to—

(1) difficulties accessing school counseling services, which is evidenced by an estimation of the American School Counselor Association that the average student-to-counselor ratio in the United States is 408 to 1;

(2) an absence of reliable programmatic and institutional outcome data; and

(3) a lack of comparable and understandable college financial aid offers;

Whereas, in addition to expanding outreach and support to recent high school graduates, colleges and universities must also expand outreach and support to all undergraduate students;

Whereas applications for State-based financial aid are available in many States for students who do not qualify for Federal student aid; and

Whereas the data on the benefits of higher education underscores and reinforces the value of ensuring that all individuals, including students enrolled in high school and working adults—

(1) understand their postsecondary options;
 (2) understand college financing opportunities; and
 (3) have support to navigate the college application
 and financial aid processes: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates November 2023 as “National
 3 College Application Month”;

4 (2) encourages the people of the United States
 5 to—

6 (A) evaluate options for pursuing higher
 7 education;

8 (B) submit a Free Application for Federal
 9 Student Aid or an appropriate application for
 10 State-based financial aid in order to receive col-
 11 lege financing opportunities; and

12 (C) support every student, regardless of
 13 the background, age, or resources of the stu-
 14 dent, in obtaining the skills and knowledge
 15 needed to thrive;

16 (3) supports efforts to better assist low-income
 17 and first-generation college students throughout the
 18 financial aid and college application process;

19 (4) urges public officials, educators, parents,
 20 students, and communities in the United States to
 21 observe National College Application Month with ap-
 22 propriate activities and programs designed to en-

1 courage students to consider, research, and apply to
2 college and for financial aid; and

3 (5) commends teachers, counselors, mentors,
4 and parents who support students throughout the
5 college application process, as well as the organiza-
6 tions and institutions partnering to eliminate bar-
7 riers to higher education.

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