

Policy Update – House Education and Labor Committee Approves *College Affordability Act*

Lewis-Burke Associates LLC – November 1, 2019

After a three-day markup, the U.S. House Education and Labor Committee approved by a vote of 28-22 on October 31, H.R. 4674, the *College Affordability Act (CAA)*, a *Higher Education Act (HEA)* reauthorization bill. It is uncertain when or if the bill, which was only supported by Committee Democrats, will be voted on by the full House. Chairman Bobby Scott (D-VA) has indicated he would like to see the bill be considered before the end of the year. The bill proposes significant increases to student financial aid, funding for Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), and student-support services, while also increasing reporting requirements and mandated positions. The CAA's impact on individual higher education institutions will vary due to proposed changes in campus-based aid funding formulas and student populations served.

The bill is unlikely to be considered by the Senate due to policy disagreements with Senate Republicans but could serve as catalyst for stalled negotiations in the Senate education committee. The CAA would unofficially support \$400 billion in spending.

Lewis-Burke's analysis of the bill when it was originally introduced on October 15 is available [here](#).

Changes to the bill that were adopted during the committee's markup include, among others:

Student Aid

- A further increase to the Pell Grant program, with a proposed maximum award of \$6,820 for the 2021-2022 school year;
- Bringing back subsidized federal student loans for graduate students at public and non-profit institutions;
- Creating a commission to examine the feasibility and economic effect of a federal program to cancel student loan debt; and
- Including full-time or part-time cooperative education as a "work-based learning" activity allowable for Federal Work-Study support.

Minority-Serving Institutions

- Increasing access to funds made available by Title III.

Student-support Services

- Requiring colleges to notify students about their eligibility for food stamps; and
- Allowing Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) funds to be used to provide services in the evening, in the summer, and to expectant parents.

Reporting Requirements

- Requiring colleges to disclose to prospective students if their non-instructional expenditure costs increase five percent from one year to the next;
- Creating requirements for colleges' net price calculators; and

- Modifying the initial proposed changes to foreign gift and contract reporting, known as HEA Section 117, to directly exclude student tuition and fee payments.

Equity

- Requiring the Education Department to provide colleges with best practices and other resources on how to prevent and address incidents of bias on campuses; and
- Requiring a Government Accountability Office (GA) study on racial and socioeconomic gaps in outcomes and retention of minority faculty and staff.

Graduate Education

- Extends the authorization of the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program, without programmatic changes.

Workforce Development

- Expanding funding for skills training at community colleges; and
- Adding cooperative education to the definition of work-based learning for Federal-Work Study purposes.

Teacher Preparation

- Encouraging the recruitment of teachers with “significant cultural and community competency.”

Sources and Additional Information:

- The Committee’s press release, summary, fact sheets, and additional details on the bill, as introduced, can be found at <https://edlabor.house.gov/the-college-affordability-act-facts>.
- Text of the latest version of the bill, the Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to HR 4674, and related amendments and votes are available at <https://edlabor.house.gov/hearings/hr-4674-college-affordability-act>.
- Lewis-Burke’s analysis of the bill as introduced can be found at https://www.lewis-burke.com/sites/default/files/policy_update_-_house_ed_and_labor_college_affordability_act_released.pdf.