

A Resolution Urging the United States Congress to Reauthorize the Higher Education Act

Sponsors: Michigan State University, University of Minnesota

WHEREAS, Access to higher education is a fundamental value of the American experience; providing individuals across the country with an opportunity for success in a field of their choosing. Higher education is a catalyst for the economy and a vehicle for innovation; and

WHEREAS, Our system of higher education has been, for decades, supported by the federal government through the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA; P.L. 89-329), which authorizes a vast array of federal student aid programs (FSA) as well as programs that support institutions of higher education (IHEs); and

WHEREAS, In FY2014, HEA provided \$134 billion of financial assistance to over 13 million students through FSA and an additional \$2.3 billion of institutional support for universities across the country. This funding is increasingly vital as many state governments continue to cut education funding; and

WHEREAS, The Higher Education Act was last reauthorized in 2008 and expired in 2013, which has had detrimental effects on students' access to financial stability, including the recent expiration of the Perkins Loan Program. This program was a staple of the FSA system and targeted the most disadvantaged students in the country; and

WHEREAS, Senator Lamar Alexander, Chairperson of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, repeatedly pledged to have HEA reauthorized within 2015; and

WHEREAS, It is urgent that Congress move swiftly to pursue a reauthorization that addresses issues of student debt, sexual assault, FSA, college accreditation, and affordability; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Big Ten Students urge Congress to reauthorize the Higher Education Act of 1965 by allowing for substantive dialogue between all stakeholders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association of Big Ten Students will lobby all relevant Members of Congress in an effort to educate legislators regarding the importance of HEA in the context of our system of education.