Hope from the House

On July 21, the House Education and Labor committee marked up HR 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009, by a vote of 30-17 – the single largest investment in higher education in history that will significantly reduce loan debt burden for college graduates, according to The Institute for College Access & Success.

HR 3221 reinvigorates the Pell Grant program, which provides need-based aid to over 7 million current college students. The bill raises the Pell Grant maximum to $5,550 for students of the most modest means, and guarantees that the Pell Grant amount will increase thereafter on a yearly basis by the cost of living plus 1 percent.

It also cuts the interest rate on subsidized Stafford student loans, and invests in community college access programs that should help hundreds of thousands of students get to graduation.

These investments are paid for by cutting excessive lender subsidies from within the loan programs, and redirecting those funds toward higher education.