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September 16, 2005

«Salutation»
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Dear «Dear»:

The California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (CASFAA) represents more than 1,700 California student aid professionals serving over 500 colleges and universities. Knowing we share a common goal with you to improve access to and delivery of federal student financial aid in the State of California as well as across the nation, we request for your support in increasing education funding as you complete work on the Fiscal Year 2006 federal budget. Attached are the CASFAA Reauthorization Recommendations Summary. We would like to highlight three key areas of need of your support.

In particular, we urge you to maintain to the Federal Perkins Loan Program by support Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act proposals which call for continuing the Federal Perkins Loan Program and increasing its loan limits. 103,150 low-income students in the California received over \$198 million in Federal Perkins Loan in 2004-05. Zero funding for Federal Perkins Loan Federal Capital Contribution (FCC) has a dual effect that negatively impacts both current and future students – the loss of federal funding to meet the increased demands as well as the loss in institutional matching funds.

During a taut-budget year, level funding for Federal Work-Study (FWS), Perkins Loan Cancellations and the FSEOG program is understandable. However, a \$50 increase in the Federal Pell Grant award is insufficient for the most severely disadvantages our students in our higher educational institutions. The proposed \$50 increase is simply not enough to offset the decreased buying power of the maximum grant amount. The ability of the 563,210 low-income Federal Pell Grant recipients to continue their education is threatened by the decreased buying power of the Federal Pell Grant maximum award. In addition, CASFAA supports use of Pell Grant as exclusively as need-based program; hence we oppose any proposal for merit based components to the Pell Grant program. Furthermore, we support a year round Pell Grant Program.

CASFAA applauds the efforts to re-direct more federal subsidies to students, but would encourage Congress to seek new models that support the efforts to achieve the parity between the Federal Family Educational Loans (FFEL) and William Ford Direct Loan (DL) Programs. CASFAA firmly believes in equalizing the terms and conditions of student loans so that all borrowers no matter what loan delivery system (FFEL & DL) have the same loan terms and conditions.

CASFAA promotes student financial and educational opportunities through the countless outreach efforts of the organizations and individual members, such as high school financial aid workshops assisting families and students to fill out the FAFSA. The outreach events and publications have been successful and are helping to create the record enrollment growth at many of our colleges and universities. With the projected deficit has declined by almost \$100 billion from the February estimate, the time to make education investment a top funding priority is now here. Please increase education funding in the House and Senate FY 2006 appropriations bills and redirect reconciliation savings from deficit reduction to improving and expanding need-based student aid programs.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or would like to discuss these issues further, please use the contact information below.

Sincerely

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