

American Association of University Professors

# THE AAUP ONLINE

## *Government Relations Newsletter*

1. Welcome
2. Federal update
3. Legislator profile
4. Note from the Government Relations Committee chair
5. Featured articles
6. Nationwide: what's on our radar screen
7. Action of the month

### **Welcome: October 2007**

Welcome to the October issue of the AAUP Government Relations Newsletter. If anything is happening in your state that you wish to share with other members and the national staff, please email [Nicole Byrd](#), government relations associate, for inclusion in the next newsletter.

### **Federal Update**

On September 27, [the President signed](#) the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 ([HR 2669](#)). As previously discussed in this space, [the bill](#) increases the Pell Grant amount, cuts subsidies to lenders, and creates an auction system for the right to offer PLUS loans.

On October 4, House Republicans introduced the [College Access & Opportunity Act](#), which primarily addresses [aspects of HEA reauthorization](#) not already covered in the aforementioned bill. It does, notably, seek to repeal the auction provision just signed into law in [HR 2669](#). Section 103 contains “Intellectual Diversity” language. Watch this space for further analysis of Title VI (International and Foreign Language Studies) provisions in pending bills.

The director of the White House initiative on historically black colleges and universities, Charles Greene, [announced his resignation](#) at the end of September, citing frustration with bureaucracy.

The House [passed a bill](#) that waives student loan obligations for active-duty military personnel during periods of service. See more details about the legislation in the **Featured Legislator** section below.

Senator Dick Durbin has once again reintroduced [the DREAM Act](#), which details provisions that would enable undocumented immigrants to gain legal status if they were brought to the United States as minors. Plans to offer the bill as an amendment to the defense authorization bill, with

the partial rationalization that this legislation could help boost military recruitment, [had to be abandoned](#) in the face of vehement criticism. However, the legislation is expected to move by mid-November.

### **Legislator Profile of the Month: Rep. John Kline**

[Representative John Kline](#) (R-MN) is a third-term congressman from Minnesota's second district. A Marine Corps veteran, he takes a special interest in issues pertaining to active-duty military personnel and veterans. He was the sponsor and most vocal backer of the recently passed permanent extension of the [Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act](#). Besides allowing for the waiving of loan payments during periods of active duty, the bill encourages institutions to allow refunds of tuition for academic periods that could not be completed due to service obligations. Rep. Kline is a member of the [House Committee on Education & Labor](#) as well as the Armed Services Committee.

### **Note from the Government Relations Committee chair, Gerry Turkel**

For far too long, the impetus for public debate and legislative initiatives addressing academic freedom has been charges leveled against the professoriate and academic administrators for supporting a left-wing worldview and for alleged hostile treatment of students who disagree. While these attacks have not borne fruit legislatively, they have warped the discussion of higher education. Instead of focusing on problems of inadequate funding for students and the need to properly staff higher education institutions, time and attention have been spent by legislators on symbolic attacks aimed at politicizing higher education. In addition, the environment generated by these attacks encourages self-censorship on the part of faculty members, thereby dampening the free and open exchange of ideas that should characterize campus life and the classroom.

In this regard, [Freedom in the Classroom](#), recently released by the AAUP, is a breath of fresh air. The report is a principled and logically argued statement of the qualities of freedom in teaching and relations with students. It formulates the differences between education and indoctrination, the true meaning of balance, hostile learning environments, and the use of contemporary examples in teaching courses. While set in the contemporary climate of ideological attacks on higher education, the report transcends current political rancor. Faculty members and students should use it to clarify their own approaches to classroom activities.

Beyond the academy, *Freedom in the Classroom* should be sent to legislators so that they have a positive sense of the constructive role of controversy and of the meaning of professing in the college classroom. If a college education is to inculcate the qualities of tolerance and the capacities of critical thinking, then the principles articulated in this report should not only be taken to heart by instructors and students, but also by the political culture in which higher education policies are framed and debated.

### **Featured Articles**

**\*Note: The *Chronicle of Higher Education* has begun a series of articles on the presidential candidates' positions on higher education. The first, which profiles Rudy Giuliani, is linked below. We encourage everyone to read the entire series.**

["Giuliani: Willing to Play Hardball with Higher Education"](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*  
[subscription required], 9/28/07

[“House Republicans and the Higher Ed. Act”](#) *Inside Higher Ed*, 10/5/07

[“5 Reasons Politicians Hate Us”](#), *Chronicle of Higher Education* [subscription required], 10/5/07

### Nationwide

Two higher education bills in California await the governor’s signature. [CA SB 190](#) mandates full disclosure of executive compensation packages, and requires that board voting on such packages be done in an open session. [CA A 1413](#) aims to get rid of in-name-only appointments by requiring that executives receiving pay for teaching duties must actually perform said duties; compensation is forbidden to surpass the ceiling amount for a CSU full professor.

Though Missouri’s “Intellectual Diversity” bill died at the end of last session, the issue is far from settled in the public eye and continues to get [press attention](#).

The DREAM Act debate continues at the state level, as Ohio introduced [legislation](#) that would forbid undocumented students to receive any financial aid from their institutions, including loans, grants and scholarships. Wisconsin is considering legislation that would [forbid the consideration](#) of race or ethnicity in the admissions process of the UW system for non-citizens.

### Action of the Month

This month’s action is a repeat request: we implore members to help us construct our questionnaire for the 2008 presidential candidates by submitting questions and/or topics they would like to see addressed in each contender’s higher education platform. Please submit your comments and suggestions to Nicole Byrd, government relations associate, at [nbyrd@aaup.org](mailto:nbyrd@aaup.org). We look forward to your active participation!

The logo for the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), consisting of the letters "AAUP" in a white, serif font on a blue background.

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