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Southern Baptist
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United States Conference of
Catholic Bishops

28 Affiliated State
Organizations

HEA Reauthorization

Objective

To secure the equitable participation of private elementary and secondary school students and teachers in programs contained within the Higher Education Act (HEA).

Rationale

The reauthorization of the Higher Education Act is a major education priority of the 109th Congress. Many provisions within HEA have a direct impact on programs at the elementary and secondary levels. CAPE believes that federal higher education programs that benefit public school students and teachers should provide equitable benefits to comparably situated private school students and teachers. Such equity is mandated in much of federal education law. It is based not only on a commitment to fairness, but also on the practical recognition that America's children are educated in a variety of schools and that the nation is best served when all its children are well-educated.

Action

Specifically, CAPE supports the following proposals.

- ★ All federal financial aid programs, including loan-forgiveness and scholarship programs, should apply alike to educators in public and private schools.
- ★ If additional high-need instructional or geographic areas are identified for accelerated loan forgiveness programs, these new provisions should cover public and private school educators.
- ★ The Direct Loan (20 USC 1087j) and Federal Family Education Loan (20 USC Sec.1078-10) programs should be amended to include, in all loan-forgiveness benefits, private school teachers who demonstrate subject-matter competency.
- ★ The teacher recruitment grants program under the Higher Education Act (20 USC 1024) should allow scholarship recipients to complete their service requirements in high-need public or private schools.
- ★ Special teacher scholarships should be established to encourage teachers to become qualified in those subject areas where the need for expert teachers is especially critical.
- ★ Teacher training programs at universities receiving federal funds should allow and recognize practice teaching in private as well as public schools.
- ★ College financial aid officers (FAOs) should be required to consider a family's elementary and secondary school tuition obligations as a "special circumstance" in determining a family's need for college financial aid. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) should be amended to reflect this requirement.

We support the above proposals, which would expand educational opportunities for students and educators in private schools and would help ensure that they receive equitable treatment under this important federal program.

Approved by CAPE's Board of Directors: June 2005