

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

April 29, 2025

Dear Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, representing 15 million workers across 63 affiliate unions, I urge you to oppose several harmful provisions in the Committee's reconciliation directive under H.Con.Res. 14, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2025. To pay for tax cuts for the ultra-wealthy, this bill would make higher education less accessible and more expensive for working families.

For example, we are concerned that the bill:

- Eliminates subsidized undergraduate loans, increasing debt burdens for low-income and working students who can least afford it.
- Eliminates Graduate and Parent PLUS loans, cutting off essential financing options for working-class families and graduate students.
- Caps student loan limits at levels that fall short of typical college costs, which may force students to abandon their education entirely or take on riskier, more expensive private loans.
- Ends existing income-driven repayment plans, replacing them with a more burdensome system that increases required payments and delays loan forgiveness, including borrowers in public service careers.
- Restricts Pell Grant eligibility to students enrolled at least half-time, while redefining full-time as 15 credit hours, disproportionately harming part-time students, working adults, and those balancing school with family obligations.
- Eliminates economic hardship deferments, removing a vital protection for workers facing layoffs or other economic difficulties.
- Repeals borrower protections, including Gainful Employment, Borrower Defense, and closed school discharge rules, thereby exposing students to greater risk of a black hole of debt from predatory institutions.

These and other harmful cuts swamp the few new investments in the bill. The bill makes higher education less affordable and less accessible to millions of families. It responds to a budget resolution that desperately needs to pay for tax cuts for billionaires. But it will ultimately bust the budgets of countless families across this country.

We urge you to reject these provisions and instead advance a higher education agenda that promotes affordability, access, and accountability.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jody Calemine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a stylized "C".

Jody Calemine
Director, Government Affairs