

## REP. DAVIS CALLS REPUBLICAN FUNDING PROPOSAL BAD FOR EDUCATING POOR

WASHINGTON, DC (DECEMBER 15, 2011) - U.S. Congressman Danny K. Davis Decries the Republican Funding Proposal to Retroactively Limit College Aid for Poor Students

U.S. Rep. Danny K. Davis decried the Republican funding proposal that would cut off 100,000 of the poorest student from Federal financial aid beginning in the 2012 school year. Davis said, "I am deeply concerned about the draconian and mean-spirited provision in the Republican Appropriations proposal that would retroactively limit Federal education grants for the lowest-income students. This proposal would slash approximately \$600 million from the poorest students, cutting off more than 100,000 students beginning next school year."

"Pell Grants help nearly 10 million low- and moderate-income Americans access and succeed in college. Even after recent increases in this Federal grant program, the current maximum grant will only cover less than one-third of the cost of attending a four-year public college in 2012, the lowest share in the history of the program. The Republican proposal would change the lifetime limit on Pell Grants, from nine years to six. This cap would apply equally to all students - whether or not they one or two semesters away from graduating."

"Additionally disturbing is the very clear impact of this provision on African American students. Minority students disproportionately rely on Pell grants. Specifically, 47% of African American, 40% of Hispanic, 36% of American Indian, and 25% of Asian American undergraduate students rely on Pell, with African Americans representing about one-quarter and Latino Americans representing approximately one-fifth of Pell recipients. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics demonstrates that the Republican provision would harm minority students - of the students who would likely be affected, 41% are African American and 22% are Latino. What makes this imbalance even more stark is the fact that African Americans and Latino students each make up only 14% of higher education students. So, even though only 14% of African American students attend higher education, 41% of the students affected by this provision are likely to be African American.

"The Republican proposal didn't recognize that student aid programs already contributed \$5 billion to deficit reduction in August. Indeed, the changes that Republicans insisted upon in the August Debt Limit agreement would have covered fully funding the Pell Grant program in FY12 and FY13 without cutting the maximum grant or student eligibility. The Republican proposal didn't seek any cuts from institutions, which Simpson-Bowles and many other plans assumed would be cut before asking the most vulnerable students to sacrifice so much. Instead, the Republican proposal made permanent, harsh changes to the poorest students who are disproportionately racial and ethnic minorities - even when the Pell Grant program is expected show a surplus next year. The Republican proposal didn't seek sacrifice from the wealthiest Americans - either retroactively or prospectively. The Republicans can't even stomach asking millionaires for a small bit more to help our nation, choosing time again to take it from the poor."

"Republicans still have an opportunity to remedy this ill-conceived provision. They could delay implementation of the limit to give students time to complete school and plan for the lower limit; they could phase-in implementation; and they could exclude remedial course credits so that these students have time to complete."