

Washington, D.C. - Congressman David Price (D-NC) today lauded House passage of legislation to reauthorize federal higher education programs and help college students who want to become teachers. Inspired by North Carolina's successful Teaching Fellows Program, Price began working over 7 years ago to establish a federal scholarship program that would reward students who commit to serve as teachers. He is the author of H.R. 1828, the Teaching Fellows Act.

The higher education bill would establish a new Teacher Quality Partnership grant program to help develop a high-quality teaching workforce for America's public schools. Under the legislation, education partnerships could use the grants for scholarships and professional development activities to help graduate and develop top notch teachers.

"New schools and the best textbooks mean very little if there is no one standing at the blackboard. Teachers turn classrooms into places of learning - they are the backbone of public education. That's why the impending national shortage of 2.5 million teachers – 80,000 in North Carolina alone – is so threatening."

The teacher recruitment program is part of the College Opportunity and Affordability Act ([H.R. 4137](#)) , which is also known as the Higher Education Act Reauthorization bill. It reauthorizes the range of federal programs that provide financial assistance to students attending college, including the Pell Grants, Perkins Loans, and college readiness programs like TRIO and GEAR UP. The House passed its version of the bill in February; today's vote was on the House-Senate compromise bill. The Senate is expected to pass the measure before adjourning for the August recess.

Price said the bill builds upon the already strong education record of the 110th Congress. Last August, the [America COMPETES Act](#) was signed into law, which established additional scholarships and professional development activities to boost the number of science and math teachers in the country. One month later, the [College Cost Reduction and Access Act](#) became law. Between cutting the interest rates on subsidized student loans in half and greatly increasing the Pell Grant award, that legislation represented the single largest investment in higher education since the GI bill.

"America's children are her greatest resource," Price said, "and robust support of public education is essential to ensure that our young people can fulfill their potential and our country can maintain its competitive edge. Today we are taking steps to make college more affordable and bolster our K-12 teaching force with highly qualified educators."

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