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Schumer and Snowe unhappy about abandoned tuition tax deduction

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U.S. Senators Charles E. Schumer and Olympia Snowe are seeking answers as to why college tuition tax cuts were left out of the 2008 budget proposal submitted by the Bush administration. Schumer was instrumental in passing a law in 2001 that allotted a deduction of as much as \$4,000 to middle-income families and a deduction of \$2,000 to families with higher incomes. Schumer contends that the absence of funding for the deduction in the 2008 budget is another example of the president's "misplaced priorities."

Pell Grant Equity Act introduced

Thousands of students will benefit if a new piece of legislation introduced by Representative Buck McKeon and Representative George Miller is passed by Congress. The Pell Grant Equity Act would repeal the "tuition sensitivity" rule that reduces the annual maximum Pell Grant amount for students attending colleges and universities with lower tuition costs. McKeon said that students should not face the prospect of losing grant aid based on the institutions they choose to attend. According to McKeon, the legislation would remove the incentive for low-cost institutions to increase tuition and make more students eligible for the maximum Pell Grant.

Senate approves Pell Grant increase

President Bush has signed a \$464 billion spending bill that increases the maximum Pell Grant by \$260 to \$4,310; furthermore, the bill calls for raising the maximum Pell Grant to \$5,400 by 2012. Introduced by Representative David R. Obey, the bill accounts for a 6% increase-the first increase in Pell Grant funding since 2003.

STAR Act reintroduced

After having been introduced by Republican Representative Tom Petri and Representative George Miller about two years ago but never brought to a vote, the Student Aid Reward (STAR) Act was recently reintroduced during a press conference. The press conference's audience, which included numerous students and several members of Congress, heard students and lawmakers talk about the rights of all students to pursue college degrees. Mainly intended to reduce fraud and wasteful expenditures of government funds, the act would provide more money to college students to pay for tuition without burdening taxpayers. The conference was attended by Senator Edward Kennedy, Chairman of the Senate HELP Committee; Representative

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George Miller, Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee; Senator Gordon Smith; and Representative Tom Petri.

March summit to address higher education commission's recommendations

At a gathering of business and higher education leaders in New York City, Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings discussed issues relating to higher education and global competition, as well as the importance of reauthorizing the No Child Left Behind Act. Spellings said that she will hold a summit next month that will include discussions of the five areas of impact identified by the Commission on the Future of Higher Education: aligning K-12 and higher-education expectations; increasing need-based aid; expanding affordability through cost transparency; serving adults and other non-traditional students; and using accreditation to support and emphasize student learning outcomes.