

RACE & ETHNICITY AS A BARRIER TO OPPORTUNITY:

A LEGISLATIVE BLUEPRINT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION EQUITY

Introduction

Below is a list of current legislation that pose solutions to the problems illustrated in YI's report on racial equity in higher education. The list is not exhaustive and not all legislation mentioned herein is officially supported by YI, but are examples of constructive approaches to these issues.

ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY

PROBLEM 1 | College access has improved, but enrollment still stratified

- SOLUTION 1A | Protect Students from Predatory Colleges (Gainful Employment Rule)
- SOLUTION 1B | Improve Consumer Information (Maintain the College Scorecard)
- SOLUTION 1C | Federal Guidance on Transfer Policy (Assist States in Refining Articulation Agreements)

PROBLEM 2 | Significant disparities in affordability

- SOLUTION 2A | Modernize the Pell Grant
 - Pathways to an Affordable Education Act
 - [H.R. 4386](#) 115th Congress
 - Sponsor: Rep. Kilmer (D-WA)
 - Would increase the maximum Pell Grant to an average four-year in-state tuition and indexes award to inflation, converts the Pell Grant program into a mandatory spending program, reinstates Year-Round Pell, and increases the eligibility period from 12 to 15 semesters.
 - Pell Grant Protection Act
 - [S.1060](#), [H.R. 1956](#) 114th Congress
 - Sponsor: Sen. Hirono (D-HI), Sen. Reed (D-RI), Sen. Whitehouse (D-RI)
 - Would convert Pell Grants to mandatory spending, indexes Pell to inflation, and reinstates Year-Round Pell.
- SOLUTION 2B | Redesign Federal Work Study
- SOLUTION 2C | Continue Second Chance Pell for Incarcerated Students
 - Restoring Education and Learning (REAL) Act
 - [H.R.254](#) 115th Congress
 - Lead Sponsors: Rep. Davis (D-IL), Rep. Scott (D-VA)
 - Reinstates Pell Grant eligibility for incarcerated individuals.
- SOLUTION 2D | Explore New Protections for Undocumented Students
 - Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream of Growing Our Economy (BRIDGE) Act
 - [S.128](#), [H.R. 496](#) 115th Congress
 - Lead Sponsors: Sen. Graham (R-SC), Sen. Durbin (D-IL); Rep. Coffman (R-CO)
 - Provides a one time provisional protected presence and work authorization to DREAMers for three years if eligibility requirements are met.
 - College Options for DREAMers Act

- [H.R. 1959](#) 114th Congress
- Lead Sponsor: Rep. Hinojosa (D-TX)
- Provides DREAMer students with access to receive federal financial aid for higher education.

PROBLEM 3 | Too few qualified students apply for aid

- SOLUTION 3A | Expand FAFSA outreach to communities of color
 - Early Pell Promise Act
 - [S. 1128](#) 114th Congress
 - Lead Sponsors: Sen. Stabenow (D-MI)
 - Would provide an early Pell grant commitment to students eligible for free or reduced price lunch in eighth grade.
- SOLUTION 3B | Simplify the FAFSA
 - Simplifying the Application for Student Aid Act
 - [H.R. 3177](#) 114th Congress
 - Sponsor: Rep. Heck (R-NV), Rep. Roe (R-TN), Rep. Polis (D-CO), Rep. Pocan (D-WI)
 - Allows for prior-prior year and improves the ability to link between the online FAFSA form and income tax data.
 - File Once FAFSA Act
 - [H.R. 5784](#) 114th Congress
 - Sponsor: Rep. Scott (D-VA)
 - Would allow a Pell Grant recipient to fill out a short form to renew their FAFSA with previous data after the first year they fill out the FAFSA.
- SOLUTION 3C | Review Financial Aid Eligibility for Drug Convictions
 - Stopping Unfair Collateral Consequences from Ending Student Success (SUCCESS) Act
 - [S.2557](#), [H.R.4004](#) 114th Congress
 - Lead Sponsor(s): Sen. Casey (D-PA) and Sen. Hatch (R-UT); Rep. Bass (D-CA)
 - Eliminates the provision that suspends a student’s financial aid eligibility after a drug offense. Would also prohibit ED from including in any federal financial form a question about an applicant’s prior drug offense convictions.

ATTAINMENT AND SUCCESS

PROBLEM 4 | Attainment/success gap has grown unacceptably wide

- Solution 4A | Invest in affordable campus-based child care
 - Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) Reauthorization Act
 - [H.R.4681](#) 114th Congress
 - Lead Sponsor(s): Rep. Duckworth (D-CA), Rep. Clark (D-MA)
 - Would reauthorize, increase funding for, and update the CCAMPIS program, requiring the Department of Education to work with stakeholders to strengthen oversight and data collection.
- SOLUTION 4B | Improve Pell Grant flexibility

The following three bills would reintroduce the year-round Pell Grant.

- The Middle Class CHANCE Act
 - [S. 1998](#) 114th Congress
 - Lead Sponsors: Rep. Carbajal (D-CA), Sen. Heinrich (D-NM)
 - Would increase individual maximum award to the average in-state tuition amount for four-year public institutions. Would restore year-round Pell Grants and increase Pell eligibility time from 12 to 15 semesters.
- Pathways to an Affordable Education Act
 - See above.
- Pell Grant Protection Act
 - See above.
- SOLUTION 4C | Align financial aid and public benefits
 - Equitable Student Aid Access Act
 - [H.R. 2015](#) 15th Congress
 - Lead Sponsor: Rep. Doggett (D-TX)
 - Would extend the automatic maximum Pell Grant to families who make less than \$30,000 or are enrolled in means tested benefit programs. Would also increase the household income threshold needed to automatically qualify for maximum awards from \$23,000 to \$30,000.
- SOLUTION 4D | Invest in Assessment Infrastructure at Minority Serving Institutions
- SOLUTION 4E | Hold Institutions Accountable for Student Success
 - Accreditation Reform and Enhanced Accountability Act of 2016
 - [S. 3380](#) 114th Congress
 - Lead Sponsor(s): Sen. Warren (D-MA), Sen. Schatz (D-HI), Sen. Durbin (D-IL)
 - Requires ED to establish standards for student outcome data that accreditors must use when evaluating colleges, including minimum baseline thresholds that institutions must meet to remain accredited. Maintains access by allowing accreditors to evaluate college affordability and enrollment levels of students receiving Pell Grants.
- SOLUTION 4F | Further Evaluate Student Support Services, Scale what works

REPAYMENT AND OTHER OUTCOMES

PROBLEM 5 | Disparities in repayment

The following proposals are positive steps toward consensus on simplifying income based repayments.

- SOLUTION 5A | Simplify Repayment Plans
 - Access to Fair Financial Options for Repaying Debt (AFFORD) Act
 - [S.1948](#) 114th Congress
 - Lead Sponsor: Sen. Merkley (D-OR)
 - Simplification of current system of nine repayment plans to two plan options. Establishes a repayment plan that is capped at 10 percent of income with a 20-year maximum repayment period and a fixed repayment plan for a maximum repayment period depending on loan balance.
 - Repay Act of 2015

- [S.85](#) 114th Congress
 - Lead Sponsors: Sen. King (I-ME) and Sen. Burr (R-NC)
 - Directs the Secretary to make servicers notify borrowers of options they may have, allows for full discharge upon disability or death without tax penalties, and preserves Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF). It would set repayment payments on 10 percent of discretionary income up to \$25,000 and 15 percent thereafter, with loan forgiveness for borrowers after 20 or 25 years depending on their initial balance.
- SOLUTION 5B | Redesign Repayment Interfaces
- SOLUTION 5C | Improve Data Collection and Use
 - Student Right to Know Before You Go Act
 - [S.1195, H.R. 2518](#) 114th Congress
 - Lead Sponsors: Sen. Wyden (D-OR), Sen. Rubio (R-FL), Sen. Warner (D-VA); Rep. Hunter (R-CA), Rep. Ryan (R-WI), Rep. Love (R-UT), Rep. Carney (D-DE), Rep. Davis (D-CA)
 - Requires IHEs to submit student level data to ED to enable reporting on data on student debt, graduation rates, and employment outcomes after completion of postsecondary program.
 - The College Transparency Act of 2017
 - [S. 1121, H.R. 2434](#) 115th Congress
 - Lead Sponsors: Sen. Hatch (R-UT), Sen. Warren (D-MA), Sen. Cassidy (R-LA), Sen. Whitehouse (D-RI), Rep. Mitchell (R-MI), Rep. Polis (D-CO)
 - Ensures accurate and complete reporting on student outcomes including enrollment, retention, completion, and post-collegiate outcomes across colleges and majors to provide customizable information for students making decisions about higher education through the creation of a privacy-protected student unit record system. .

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