

## Murphy Announces Progress on Largest Student Aid Bill in History at Central Connecticut State University

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NEW BRITAIN - Today, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) came to Central Connecticut State University to announce action in Washington on the single largest investment in aid to help students and families pay for college in history -- and at no cost to taxpayers.

"Finding ways to make college more affordable is a no-brainer - it's an investment in Connecticut's economy and our workforce. This ends needless subsidies for private lenders and invests it back where it should be, in the pockets of students," said Murphy.

The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA) finds \$87 billion in savings through simplifying the federal loan process, uses approximately \$10 billion to help pay down the deficit, and directs the remaining funds toward Pell Grants, Perkins Loans, community colleges, and early education programs.

The bill converts all new federal student lending to the stable, effective and cost-efficient Direct Loan program instead of through lenders subsidized by taxpayers in the federally-guaranteed student loan program. Unlike the lender-based program, the Direct Loan program is entirely insulated from market swings and can therefore guarantee students access to low-cost federal college loans, in any economy.

It increases the maximum Pell Grant from \$5,350 in 2009 to \$5,550 in 2010 and \$6,900 in 2019 and keeps interest rates low on subsidized federal student loans. In 2010 in Connecticut, there will be more than 12,000 students in Connecticut benefitting from Pell Grants. This bill will increase the amount of Pell Grant dollars available in Connecticut by more than \$10 million.

Additionally, the bill simplifies the application process for federal loans, making it easier for families to apply. Building on proposals recently put forth by the Obama administration, the legislation will dramatically cut down the number of questions on the form by allowing students and families to apply for aid using the information on their tax returns.

"In addition to my full course load and running the student government, I work two jobs to pay for school. I know it's a worthwhile investment in my future, but it's stressful to take on so much at my age. This legislation will go a long way in helping my fellow students pay for the education that is becoming increasingly necessary in today's economy," said Andrew Froning, CCSU Student Government President.

Murphy was also able to secure passage of an amendment to the bill that will allow states to use some of their funding to partner with local universities and colleges to create degree and training programs for early education teachers, just like they do now for K-12 teachers. Over the last few months, Murphy has met with parents, teachers, school administrators and others from Torrington, Danbury and across northwest Connecticut who cited the lack of early education teaching degree programs as a barrier to finding enough highly qualified early education teachers in Connecticut.

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