

Alaska State Legislature

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Senator Bettye Davis

SJR 2: FEDERAL HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING/PROGRAM

An resolution “Urging the United States Congress to establish a federal program to rebuild student access to public higher education in Alaska and elsewhere and to appropriate sufficient funding for that purpose.”

SPONSOR STATEMENT

SJR 2 urges congress to appropriate adequate funding for higher education to all United States Citizens. This resolution allows Alaskans in need of assistance to receive a higher education without the burdening dilemma of covering all educational expenses. President Barack Obama has set higher education as a major priority for America. In order for our country to continue to be a leading nation in higher education, higher education must become more accessible.

Over the past 10 years, higher education enrollment has risen by 20 percent. During this same period, state subsidy of higher education has continued to decline. This has caused the student tuition and fees to rise by 316 percent while overall inflation rose by only 83 percent. This increase financial responsibility on many students and their families disincentives higher education for many minorities, low-income families, and individuals trying to excel in their career of choice.

Alaskans can obtain a higher education, but the federal government must do more to make higher education more accessible to our citizens. SJR 2 recognizes both the financial and foundational changes that need to be made in accessibility to higher education. SJR 2 asks for the establishment of a new program appropriating \$70 billion dollars in funding and rebuilds student access to higher education. This amount is less than 10% of the total funds allocated from the Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. SJR 2 includes college grants for our military veterans, allowing for student loan forgiveness, and increases the funding available through the existing PELL Grant Program.

SJR 2 urges the President and Congress to close the educational achievement gap in our country and fuel the future generation’s educational abilities in our global economy.