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Pocan Introduces Bipartisan Legislation to Simplify the Student Financial Aid Application Process

Washington, D.C – Today, U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan (WI-02), along with Reps. Jared Polis (D-CO), Joe Heck (R-NV), and Phil Roe (R-TN), members of the House Education and Workforce Committee, introduced the Simplifying the Application for Student Aid Act, H.R. 3177, a bill which would simplify the student financial aid process.

“Federal financial aid is essential to ensure that college is accessible for students in Wisconsin and all across the country,” said Rep. Mark Pocan. “The current student financial aid application process is overly complex and often results in students missing opportunities to receive much needed aid. Allowing students and families to access financial aid information earlier provides them with the opportunity to make better-informed decisions about their higher education plans. This bipartisan legislation will ensure more students are able to access federal financial aid to make college more affordable.”

“I applaud Rep. Pocan for his leadership in using “Prior Prior Year” in the Federal student aid application process. This important legislation is nothing short of transformational for students who rely on financial aid to attend college,” said Susan Fischer, Director of Financial Aid at UW-Madison. “This straightforward change will allow families to report more accurate information on the FAFSA, will allow earlier submission of the FAFSA and ultimately allow for earlier aid notification by schools. This bill is extremely important to especially first generation students who may be on the fence regarding attending a post-secondary school; it is quite simply a win-win proposition.”

“One of our top priorities is providing more students easier access to an affordable, quality higher education,” said Ray Cross, President of the University of Wisconsin System. “Making income data available earlier and more accessible for families—particularly families with low-income and first-generation students—gives them the time, support, and confidence they need to make one of the most important decisions and investments of their lives.”
The *Simplifying the Application for Student Aid Act* would allow students to use family income data from two years prior to the date of the FAFSA application. It would also allow income tax data to be automatically inputted into the FAFSA forms and give universities more time to verify the income of their students. The bill currently has 19 original cosponsors, including 9 Republican Members of Congress.

Rep. Pocan, along with a bipartisan group of Senators and House Members previously sent a [letter](#) to Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan asking the Department of Ed to allow students to use prior-prior income data.

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