



500 E. Lorain Street

**National Association of College Stores**

Oberlin, Ohio 44074

July 31, 2008

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy  
Chairman  
Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor and Pensions  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Enzi  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor and Pensions  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable George Miller  
Chairman  
Committee on Education and Labor  
U. S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Education and Labor  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators Kennedy and Enzi and Representatives Miller and McKeon:

On behalf of the National Association of College Stores (NACS), I write to express our appreciation for your leadership in higher education and for your work in renewing the Higher Education Act during this Congress.

NACS is the professional trade association representing college bookstores. The role of our more than 3,100 members is to contribute to the educational mission of higher education. They seek to provide the highest level of service to faculty and students by listening and responding to their needs and interests.

We are pleased that the conference report of H.R. 4137, *The Higher Education Reauthorization and College Opportunity Act of 2008*, includes recognition of the need for affordable access to quality course materials for all students. The provisions will help address problems students and college bookstores have long raised and have been working on regarding the affordability of course materials and their effective use in the classroom. Most importantly, it will help ensure that those responsible for selecting course materials have the information they need to make well informed textbook choices on behalf of their students, foster greater awareness of how their decisions impact college affordability, and identify positive steps they can take to increase value for students.

We are particularly appreciative that the conference agreement includes provisions from the *Affordable Books for College Act* establishing a pilot program with authorized funding to reduce textbook costs, an increase of the campus-based aid allowance for books and supplies to \$600, and the establishment of an advisory commission and competitive grant program to make course materials more accessible for students with disabilities. We also support the overall effort to raise awareness of course material costs as an important component of higher education costs for consideration and budgeting by prospective students and parents.

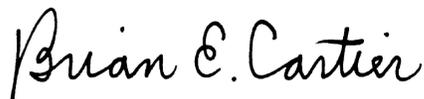
However, we and many others nevertheless continue to have concerns about the viability, effectiveness, and cost of providing course material information to students through online course schedules for pre-registration and regular registration purposes. Throughout our discussions on this bill we have emphasized the need to provide accurate course material information to students. Students are ill-served when they are given premature and inaccurate information that may result in costly purchasing mistakes or bad class selection decisions.

All college stores and institutions currently provide course material information well in advance of the start of classes, and many schools also link such information to course registration systems. However, the earlier the release of such information, the greater the risk that the information may be subject to change due to a number of factors beyond the control of the college store and institution. To that end we are pleased the conference report and the Statement of the Managers addresses these concerns giving authority and greater flexibility to institutions in how they provide course material information to students and when.

With annual spending on required course materials running about \$700 annually, Congress, acting in a bipartisan manner, has taken a positive step in addressing affordability and access to the educational tools students need to succeed in school and improve their lives. It is our fervent hope that Congress will build upon this work next year by renewing higher education tax credits that include books as an eligible expense in the same way multiple bipartisan bills in Congress currently propose. We look forward to working with you on this important agenda.

The National Association of College Stores supports efforts to enhance affordable and equitable access to quality course materials, and our association and members will continue to work as an ally for student interests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian E. Cartier". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Brian E. Cartier, CAE  
Chief Executive Officer