

## **U.S. House Approves Boyda / Edwards Amendment to Help Military Families Afford College**

### **Press Release**

**By:** Nancy Boyda

**Date:** Feb. 7, 2008

**Location:** Washington, DC

The U.S. House of Representatives today overwhelmingly approved the Boyda / Edwards Amendment to H.R. 4137, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2007. The amendment will extend to military families nationwide the same tuition benefits that Kansas currently offers to military service members.

Due to the nature of military service, service members are frequently transferred from one state to another. Because many states tie a student's eligibility for in-state tuition to their parents' state of residency, this leaves the children of many military families at constant risk of losing their in-state benefits.

Since 2005, Kansas law has ensured that military dependants continue to pay in-state tuition even after their parents or guardians transfer out-of-state. The Boyda / Edwards Amendment, coauthored by Congresswoman Nancy Boyda (Kansas Second District) and Congressman Chet Edwards (Texas 17th District), will extend the same benefit to military families nationwide.

Rep. Boyda said, "Kansas has led the nation in helping military families pay for college. Today's amendment extends Kansas' promises to military families across America."

The difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition rates can be enormous. At the average four-year public university, the in-state tuition rate is \$6,185 per year, compared to an out-of-state rate of \$16,640. As a result, a student whose military parent transfers out-of-state in his freshman year can, under current federal law, expect to pay \$41,820 in higher fees over the course of his college education.

Rep. Boyda added, "When military service members sign up to serve America, they willingly make many sacrifices. They give up control of where they live and work, and they risk losing their lives. They shouldn't have to sacrifice their children's future, too."

The Boyda / Edwards Amendment also addresses the five states that currently provide no residency benefits to the dependants of military families. Under its provisions, all dependants of military service members will be eligible to receive in-state tuition in the state where their family is stationed.

The amendment was attached to the College Opportunity and Affordability Act, a comprehensive reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. The broader legislation includes several additional measures to help military families afford college. It creates a

new scholarship program for active duty military personnel and family members, and it establishes support centers to help veterans graduate from college. It also freezes student loan interest for soldiers serving on active duty for up to 60 months. The interest freeze will save the average service member about \$1,200 over the course of a 12-15 month deployment, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

The bill also includes numerous provisions that benefit all American students, whether or not their families serve in the military. It streamlines the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process and creates an easy-to-navigate two-page FAFSA-EZ form for low-income families. It requires student loan programs to adopt strict codes of conduct. It provides students with advance information on textbook pricing to help them plan for expenses before each semester. And it creates programs to bolster students' interest in science, technology and critical foreign languages through collaborations with businesses and other stakeholders.

Rep. Boyda said, "Last year Congress passed into law the College Cost Reduction Act, the largest federal investment in student aid since the GI Bill. It was a first step toward making college more affordable. Today we took one step further. Slowly but surely, we're approaching the day when every Kansas student who wants to attend college can afford to do so."

The House approved the Boyda-Edwards Amendment on a voice vote. The overall College Opportunity and Affordability Act later passed by 354-58. It now goes to the Senate for further action.

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