Arnold Ventures

The College Transparency Act

Our existing postsecondary data systems are incomplete, duplicative, inefficient, and burdensome. Current law prohibits the federal government from collecting and reporting accurate data on student outcomes at each college and university in the U.S. Without this information, students and families are not empowered to make well-informed choices about their education, policymakers and institutions cannot craft evidence-based policies to help students succeed, and employers do not have the talent pipeline they need to grow the economy. Furthermore, current postsecondary data is incomplete and does not count all students.

THE COLLEGE TRANSPARENCY ACT:

Provides a secure, privacy-protected, student-level data network

- Overturns the ban on student-level data collection in the Higher Education Act
- Houses the data network within the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) using strong security standards and data governance protocols
- Protects all students by limiting data disclosures, prohibiting the sale of data, penalizing illegal data use, protecting vulnerable students, prohibiting the use of the data for law enforcement, safeguarding personally identifiable information, and requiring notice to students and regular audits of the system
- Streamlines burdensome federal reporting requirements for postsecondary institutions

Turns existing data into actionable insight

- Accurately reports on student outcomes including enrollment, completion, and post-college success across colleges and programs
- Leverages existing data at federal agencies and institutional data by matching a limited set of data to calculate aggregate information to answer questions critical to understanding and improving student success
- Provides information disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender to identify inequities in students' success
- Feeds aggregate information back to states and institutions so they can develop and implement targeted, data-informed strategies aimed at supporting student success
- Reforms and improves the current system to provide accurate, timely, and high-quality aggregate data in a user-friendly, transparent way for students and families, policymakers, institutions, and businesses who have a right to know answers to key questions about student success and access

Holds value for students, employers, and U.S. competitiveness

- The College Transparency Act gives students access to accurate information on the affordability, employment, and income outcomes on the institution and program level before they decide where to enroll, what to study, and how to pay for it
    - It helps students understand the cost of higher education and how they are likely to fare in the job market **before** they go into debt to pay for a credential, which will help students make better choices that align with their goals.

- The College Transparency Act will help address the skills gap because it allows students to find and attend programs that not only interest them but also meet the needs of employers, ultimately making the American economy stronger
    - It enables employers to strengthen their talent pipeline by using data to find the programs and institutions that are graduating individuals with the skills they need, to invest in programs that already exist but could be scaled up, or to establish new programs

The College Transparency Act is a bipartisan, bicameral bill that was carefully crafted to ensure student privacy is protected by incorporating data that already exists at the institution or federal government level. By safely and securely leveraging national data assets, the College Transparency Act can make sure that all students, families, employers, and policymakers have the information they need to make the best decisions in higher education.

The College Transparency Act was introduced by Senators Senators Bill Cassidy, (R-LA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Roger Marshall (R-KS), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Chuck Grassley (R-IA), and John Hickenlooper (D-CO) and Representatives. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), Joe Wilson (R-SC), Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), Nancy Mace (R-S.C.), and Mikie Sherrill (NJ-11).

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