



Act Supports Technical Education

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Unanimously passed by the Senate, The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act, S.250, would concentrate more effectively on the needs of the American workforce that require skilled workers. The Act is slated to provide opportunities to students seeking technical education that would help them get skilled and high-wage jobs. It would produce further accountability between local training programs and federal educators; make stronger the bonds between the schools, colleges, and businesses; and give more importance to academic studies for technical education supported by federal government, making it on par with other federal education programs. Providing more than \$1.2 billion in federal funding, the conference agreement reauthorizes and revises the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1998; if approved by The House of Representatives, it will be sent along for the President's signature.

\$6 Million For National Resource Centers

The Department of Education has appropriated \$6 million to The University of Minnesota Institute for Global Studies for three National Resource Centers. To be implemented through the Title VI program, the move supports U.S. global competitiveness and national security. The fund consists of three four-year grants that will be utilized in establishing a new National Resource Center primarily for Asian studies and in renewed funding for two already established national resource centers for western European and international studies.

Located at the University of Minnesota, the centers aim at promoting studies of the less commonly taught languages, globalizing the university curriculum, and establishing intellectual vigor among both the university and community.

Education Costs Surpass Cost Of Living

The increased cost of living is clearly not keeping up with the cost of education. The Massachusetts PIRG Education Fund released a report stating that the average cost of education in the Boston area had surged by 107% to \$19,200 from 1993 and 2004. However, the cost of living escalated by 37%, while healthcare costs increased by 74%. Consequently, an increased number of students now rely on student loans for a four-year degree and begin their careers with considerable debt. In 2004, two-thirds of college graduates completed school with student loans; and with loan rates having risen significantly in July, students will find it more difficult to pay for basic necessities. High student debts may even lead to lower credit scores and ultimately bankruptcy. Unless the acceleration in loan rates is curbed, need-based financial aid is increased, and the government initiates steps to restrain rising tuition costs, students completing school are prone to being debt-ridden.