

Reauthorization of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA or HEA)

By 2018, 63% of the more than 46 million jobs that will need to be filled in the U.S will require at least some postsecondary education.¹ While there are many educational choices available for students after they graduate from high school, career and technical education (CTE) continues to be in demand as it consistently meets the needs of employers and students.

The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, which served as the tenth reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, provides critical resources for students interested in CTE programs. The law provides almost \$50 billion in loans, grants, work-study and institutional aid in support of postsecondary education. These include the Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Work Study, and Direct Loan Programs. SMRP is committed to education and workforce development and believes that the reauthorization of the HEOA is essential for ensuring students have the opportunity to study CTE programs.

SMRP supports the following recommendations for the reauthorization of the HEOA:

- **Reduce Barriers to Higher Education for All Students:** Congress should reexamine modern learning by allowing institutions and CTE centers that qualify for aid with more flexibility to provide student-centric programs, such as competency based education and dual enrollment.
- **Reinstate the Year-Round Pell Grant:** In 2008, Congress created a “year-round” Pell Grant for HEOA to accommodate students who desire to attend college continuously, rather than suspend studies in the summer. Within three years, year-round was eliminated because of the recession. However, many low-income students who attend college full time and receive Pell Grants often run through the maximum annual grant amount within two semesters, leaving no Pell money for summer courses. SMRP supports the year-round Pell because it would encourage students to stay on track, and boost graduation rates.
- **Work-Study Incentives:** SMRP believes that reauthorization should prioritize employment related to field-of-study for work-study students, and allow approved/related work-study to qualify for required internship or credit.

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¹According to a report by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce
<https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/HelpWanted.ExecutiveSummary.pdf>