

## Loebsack, Bustos Introduce New Legislation to Give More Flexibility to Students Receiving Pell Grants

Written by Vonnie Hampel  
Thursday, 09 May 2013 15:18

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*Bill Would Give Students More Flexibility In Choosing Classes & Let Them Enter Workforce Faster*

More information on Loebsack's original legislation [HERE](#) ; Watch Video Of Bustos' One Minute Floor Speech Introducing Bill [HERE](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressman Dave Loebsack (IA-02) and Congresswoman Cheri Bustos (IL-17) introduced new legislation to give more flexibility to students receiving Pell grants. The *Access to Education and Training Act* would allow students who receive Pell grants to take advantage of the Pell grants year-round, including during the summer months, even if the student went to school full-time during the fall and spring semesters. Many of those who would benefit most are non-traditional students who want to complete their courses faster so they can get back into the workforce.

Last month, Bustos held a “Communities Working Together For Jobs” community college tour across the 17<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of Illinois. During the tour, Bustos met with students, faculty, administrators, businesspeople, and others, at the seven community colleges that serve the region. She heard numerous concerns about the lack of year-round flexibility for students receiving Pell grants, and today's bill is a response to those concerns. Congressman Loebsack authored a provision that created year-round Pell grants in the Higher Education Opportunity Act, which was signed into law in 2008. However, the year-round Pell grant was

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unfortunately eliminated in 2011 and under current law, a student who goes to school full-time during the fall and spring semesters would not be eligible to receive Pell grant awards for summer courses. In response to the ongoing need for more flexibility, Bustos and Loeb sack partnered to introduce today's legislation which would reinstate the flexibility that was provided by Loeb sack's provision in 2008.

"I know first-hand the difference education makes in students' lives and ability to secure good jobs. That's why I'm continuing to fight to make higher education more affordable for lowans. The year-round Pell grant availability that I created as a part of the Higher Education Opportunity Act in 2008 allowed students to progress towards their degrees at a faster pace with less debt. I have heard from countless students who's ability to afford college would be significantly improved by the availability of year-round Pell grants. It was incredibly disappointing that it was eliminated in 2011 due to budget pressure, but I look forward to working with Congresswoman Bustos to push for reinstatement as work begins on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act," **said Congressman Loeb sack.**

"As the mother to three sons, I know firsthand how important a quality and affordable education is to building a middle class life," **said Congresswoman Cheri Bustos.** "College affordability was a major topic of conversation on my tour of the seven community colleges that serve our district last month, and that is why today I am introducing a bill with Congressman Loeb sack to give more flexibility to students receiving Pell grant awards. This bill would give students more options in choosing when to take classes and would let them enter the workforce faster. The colleges and universities in our region offer a pathway to success to many, so I'll continue to do everything I can to help make them affordable and accessible for all."

"Pell grants enable millions of students to enroll in college each year, but unless we maintain flexibility in awarding Pell grants to students who are in year-round and accelerated programs, we are not maximizing the impact for the trained and retrained workforce called for by business and industries in our communities," **said Dr. Thomas Baynum, the President of Black Hawk College.**

"I applaud Congresswoman Bustos and Congressman Loeb sack for listening to the needs of community college students, and for introducing this important bill today which would increase access to higher education and workforce development programs in our region, and around the country."

Bustos was joined by Dr. Thomas Baynum, the President of Black Hawk College in Moline, on a conference call earlier today announcing the legislation.

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Text of the bill can be found [HERE](#) and video of Bustos' one minute floor speech can be found [HERE](#).

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