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STUDENT GOVERNMENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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A.R. 46. Opposing an Amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1998

WHEREAS A provision in the Higher Education Act of 1998 mandates that students convicted of any drug-related offense (without regard to the nature of the offense or the offender) be denied eligibility for financial aid for periods ranging from one year to "indefinite," and;

WHEREAS No other class of offender (including those convicted of rape or other violent offense) faces similar restriction on student loan eligibility, and;

WHEREAS This provision will impact primarily students of low to moderate economic means who cannot afford drug rehabilitation treatment, and;

WHEREAS This provision will also have a discriminatory impact on people of color, as their communities are disproportionately targeted for enforcement of the drug laws (African Americans, who comprise 12% of the nation's population and 13% of drug users, make up 55% of those convicted for drug offenses), and;

WHEREAS To the extent that the federal government involves itself in education it should be focused on making it easier, not more difficult for citizens to educate themselves, and;

WHEREAS Education is an important factor in allowing people to become more productive, well-rounded citizens and in providing alternatives to drug abuse and drug dealing;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE, THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN, as representatives of the students of one of the world's largest institutions of higher education, express our opposition to the removal of financial aid from students convicted of drug crimes, and urge the Congress of the United States to repeal the offending amendment to the HEA.

Sponsored by Representative Karen Gross (Liberal Arts) and President Parisa Fatehi