

**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**  
**TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN**



**NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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**Government Reform Committee Reauthorizes**  
**Davis-Norton D.C. College Access Act**

*Program Has Levelled the Playing Field for D.C. Graduates*

**Washington, D.C.** - House Government Reform Committee today unanimously approved H.R. 4012, the District of Columbia College Access Reauthorization Act, introduced by Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), which would permanently reauthorize the D.C. College Access Act of 1999.

Chairman Davis and Congresswoman Norton praised the college access program created by the legislation – known as the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant (TAG) program – as a tremendous success that has not only helped make higher education affordable for thousands of District of Columbia students but helped stabilize the population of the nation’s capital.

“The impact of the Tuition Assistance Grant program is undeniable. The program we reauthorized represents a shot at a better education and, in turn, a better life for countless D.C. children,” Chairman Davis said. “This levels the playing field for D.C. residents, who do not have an in-state college system, like the rest of the country. And it serves as another tool to keep the District strong and vibrant, which is critical to the overall health of the region.”

“The extraordinary popularity of the College Access Act in all wards of the city makes the best statement about the value of the law to D.C. residents. The Act has done wonders to help retain taxpayers and to make college possible for many. The return on the federal dollar is incalculable,” Congresswoman Norton said.

The Government Reform Committee held a hearing last Thursday to highlight the impact of the program. D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams testified that since the creation of the program the number of high school graduates in the District continuing on to college has risen by an astonishing 28 percent. The national increase in college-bound students over that same period was just 5 percent.

TAG covers the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition rates, up to \$10,000 per year, for District of Columbia high school graduates who attend public colleges and universities in other states. Alternatively, the Program provides \$2,500 annually in tuition assistance to D.C. high school graduates who attend private colleges and universities in the counties surrounding the District. Finally, an amendment to the legislation in 2001 authorized the Program to provide \$2500 annually to D.C. high school graduates who attend private Historically Black Colleges and Universities throughout the country.

The purpose of the original 1999 legislation was twofold. First, the legislation was intended to address the fact that the District of Columbia does not have a state university system to provide high school graduates in our nation's capital the same opportunity that college-bound seniors in each of the 50 states have, specifically a network of state-supported institutions to attend at relatively low cost. The second purpose of the legislation was to deter families from moving out of the District to surrounding states in order to take advantage of in-State higher education options, thus depriving the District of much needed tax revenue.

According to a survey conducted by the program, the vast majority of students who have received assistance through the program have indicated that the existence of the grants made a difference in their decision to attend college, and was a key factor in deciding which college to attend.

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