

NCWGE NATIONAL COALITION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN EDUCATION

March 29, 2006

Re: Hart Amendment (#10) to H.R. 609, the College Access and Opportunity Act of 2005

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE), we are writing to urge you to **support the Hart amendment** to the College Access and Opportunity Act of 2005 (H.R. 609). NCWGE is a nonprofit organization of more than 50 organizations dedicated to improving educational opportunities for girls and women. Our mission is to provide leadership in and advocate for the development of national education policies that benefit all women and girls. NCWGE's Task Force on Higher Education has advocated for more than 30 years for policies and programs to advance women and girls in at all levels of education so that they can achieve long-term economic independence.

Since the last reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) in 1998, NCWGE has witnessed many improvements in the collegiate environment for women and girls. This coalition fought to ensure many important provisions were included in the 1998 bill, including women's access to higher education, supplemental services for parenting and nontraditional students, and increased safety measures on campus. However, NCWGE finds there is still much to be done in order to make the college dream a reality for women of all ages and in all circumstances.

NCWGE strongly supports expanding access to higher education for all women, particularly low-income women. A significant barrier that can prevent low-income women from participating in higher education is the inability to obtain convenient and affordable childcare. Providing quality day care on campuses for students will allow thousands of women to pursue postsecondary education. At present, campus based childcare only services a small percentage of the need. There must be an investment that will support the increased participation of low-income women in post-secondary education through the provision of campus-based childcare centers. Campus-based childcare programs offer an opportunity to dismantle the barriers that some women face in trying to obtain a college education.

The Hart amendment would encourage institutions of higher education to establish and operate pregnant and parenting student services offices to serve pregnant students, parenting students, prospective parenting students who are anticipating a birth or adoption, and students who are placing or have placed a child for adoption. These centers will assist students with locating support services such as child care, family housing, flexible academic scheduling such as telecommuting programs, parenting classes and programs, and post-partum counseling and support groups. This language will be added as an additional authority under the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), which was established to improve postsecondary education opportunities.

NCWGE supports efforts to provide services for pregnant and parenting students in the Higher Education Act reauthorization and we are pleased that the Hart amendment provides services to enable women to pursue and persist in higher education. NCWGE urges you to **support the Hart amendment** to the College Access and Opportunity Act of 2005 (H.R. 609). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lisa Maatz, American Association of University Women, at 202/785-7720, or Jocelyn Samuels, National Women's Law Center, at 202/588-5180.

Sincerely,



Lisa M. Maatz
NCWGE Chair



Jocelyn Samuels
NCWGE Vice-Chair

Enclosures

NCWGE NATIONAL COALITION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN EDUCATION

Member Organizations

Academy for Educational Development
American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Association of School Administrators
American Association of University Women
American Civil Liberties Union
American Council on Education
American Educational Research Association
American Federation of Teachers
American Psychological Association
Association for Gender Equity Leadership in Education
Association for Women in Science
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc.
Association of Teacher Educators
Business & Professional Women USA
Center for Advancement of Public Policy
Center for Women's Policy Studies
Council of Chief State School Officers Resource Center on Educational Equity
Dads and Daughters
Equal Rights Advocates
Federation of Organizations for Professional Women
Feminist Majority Foundation
Gallaudet University, Women's Basketball Coach
Girl Scouts of the USA
Girls Count
Girls Incorporated
Girlstart
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
Ms. Foundation for Women
Myra Sadker Advocates for Gender Equity
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
National Association for Girls & Women in Sport
National Association of Collegiate Women Athletic Administrators
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Council of Administrative Women in Education
National Council of Negro Women
National Education Association
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women and Families
National Women's History Project
National Women's Law Center
National Women's Political Caucus

NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, Legal Momentum
Parent and Teacher Association
Partners of the Americas
U. S. Student Association
Wider Opportunities for Women
Women Work!
Women's Edge
Women's Research and Education Institute
Women's Sports Foundation
Young Women's Christian Association