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McMorris Rodgers Named as Conferee to Higher Education Reauthorization

(Washington, D.C.) Today, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers' top education and competitiveness priorities are one step closer to becoming law. McMorris Rodgers was named to the conference committee for the higher education reauthorization. The conferees met last night and agreed to the report which contains much of the legislation McMorris Rodgers has been fighting for.

“As someone who is still paying off student loans, I understand how difficult it is for parents and students as they face dramatic increases in the cost of a college education,” McMorris Rodgers said. “As the first in my family to graduate from college, I know first hand the value and importance of a good education. It is the doorway to success and a critical piece to making our country more competitive in a global economy.”

McMorris Rodgers represents eight colleges and universities across Eastern Washington. She serves on the Education and Labor Committee and is pleased the Higher Education Reauthorization and College Opportunity Act of 2008 reflects some of her top priorities.

McMorris Rodgers has been a champion of increasing our nation's competitiveness since coming to Congress, and the bill contains some of her provisions. It provides scholarships to U.S. students studying math, science, engineering and computer science, providing those students agree to work in that field for five years after graduation. The bill also creates a grant program to encourage innovative programs for teaching foreign language

The bill allows **adjunct content specialists** in schools—something else McMorris Rodgers has long advocated. This allows school districts to recruit content specialists from among mid-career professionals with experience in math, science and critical foreign languages. “We need to allow qualified professionals to take time out of their career to enter the classroom and share their real world experience,” McMorris Rodgers said.

In addition to increasing our nation's competitiveness, **the Higher Education Reauthorization and College Opportunity Act of 2008 will help make college more affordable for Eastern Washington students.** The bill will provide funding for the

Perkins Loan program, which provides approximately \$8.7 million for Eastern Washington colleges and universities each year.

The bill also helps crack down on fraudulent diploma mills. “We need to protect the integrity of our higher education system and the diplomas so many of us worked so hard to earn,” McMorris Rodgers said. In Spokane, purchasers of these phony degrees from a local diploma mill included more than 150 educational, military and government employees. Provisions in this bill increase transparency to give consumers more information and create a task force to develop legislation that will further crack down on fraudulent diploma mills.

The U.S. Constitution requires that in order for a bill to be presented to the President for signature, it must pass both the House and Senate in the exact same form. The role of a Conference Committee is to work out differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. As Ranking Member on the Water and Power Subcommittee, McMorris Rodgers served on the Conference Committee for the Farm Bill in April.

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