



Press Release—March 10, 2005

**Removing Impediments to Student Education (RISE) Act
Statement of NASFAA for Immediate Release**

Good morning, I am Larry Zaglaniczny, Director of Congressional Relations at the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA). NASFAA is a professional association representing student financial aid administrators at approximately 3,100 postsecondary institutions across the nation.

NASFAA is pleased to support Representative Barney Frank's legislation the Removing Impediments to Students' Education (RISE) Act. This bill repeals the Higher Education Act's Section 484 Subsection (r) that denies access to federal student aid for those convicted for drug use or sale of drugs. We especially want to thank Representative Frank for his leadership and also thank all the Members of Congress who are cosponsoring this bill for their support.

Many financial aid administrators over the years have objected to the Congress' and the Administration's tendency to micromanage the federal student aid system. This is a historical concern that transcends party affiliations. Both Democratic and Republican Congresses and Administrations, from time to time, have been guilty of using the federal student financial aid system to interject various social goals that while well-meaning are neither congruent with efforts to simplify the application process nor compatible with the greater social goal of providing students with financial need the opportunity to gain an education. An education that not only benefits the individual, but also benefits our society. Higher Education Act Section 484(r) is such a provision.

Our members do not condone illegal drug use in our society and believe that those engaged in illegal drug activities should be appropriately punished. But they also believe it is an inappropriate use of federal power to utilize the student assistance programs to deny such assistance to individuals. These individuals, convicted of felony drug possession or the sale of illegal drugs, have paid their debt to society through the justice system. They now are attempting to gain useful skills and an education for their advancement in our society and workplace. They should not be denied those opportunities. Repeal of Higher Education Act Section 484(r) is necessary to ensure such an outcome. Repeal should be accomplished now.

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"Opening Doors of Educational Opportunity"

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