

To the office of U.S. Representative Joseph D. Morelle

Re: HR 10451 (119th Congress), Emergency Grant Aid for College Students Act • Latest action (2026-09-16): Referred to the House Committee on Education and Workforce.

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Office of record (Congress.gov): 570 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC • (202) 225-3615

Temporary Emergency Student Grant Fund With Cap and Sunset

The measure, as described from the official record: Help college students stay enrolled when a sudden expense hits, by having colleges provide small emergency grants.

THE PROPOSAL

Congress has power under Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 to spend for the general welfare and under Clause 18 to carry out that spending through laws that are necessary and proper. That power permits time-limited emergency aid to keep students enrolled, but the Tenth Amendment bars direct federal control of colleges. The strongest objection is that Washington would run campus aid; this proposal answers it by leaving daily decisions with colleges and states, with a firm cap and a five-year sunset.

The Emergency Student Stay-Enrolled Fund would create a narrow, temporary federal grant program for sudden student costs. Colleges that take part would give small, one-time grants to enrolled students facing an urgent expense, such as housing loss, food shortage, child care failure, transport breakdown, or a medical bill. The goal is simple: keep a short-term shock from ending a degree.

Colleges would run the program under clear federal rules and keep control of daily decisions. Each college would publish plain written standards, decide cases within 14 days, give a written reason for a denial, and offer a quick appeal. Funds would go to students, not to tuition balances owed to the school. No student data would be shared outside the program except as needed to run audits or as required by law.

Spending would be capped and checked each year. The program would spend no more than \$500 million per year from annual funds approved by Congress, with no more than \$1,500 per student per year. The Department of Education would manage the grants, track outcomes, recover misspent funds after notice and a chance to respond, and send Congress a public yearly report on funds spent, students helped, and time to decision.

The program would respect state and campus roles while avoiding a larger federal office. Existing college, state, and private aid would remain first in line, and this fund would fill urgent gaps only. The authority would end after five years unless Congress reviews the results and votes to extend it.

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS (VFA PROPOSAL)

Effective Date	School year starting July 1 after enactment, pending Department guidance
Enforcement Mechanism	Department reviews campus spending, recovers misspent funds after notice and chance to respond, and publishes annual results; students may appeal campus denials through a simple written process
Funding Amount	Capped at \$500 million per year, with no more than \$1,500 per student per year unless extended by Congress
Funding Source	Annual appropriations, with no new tax and no transfer from other student aid programs
Oversight Body	Department of Education, with annual public report to Congress and review by the Government Accountability Office before renewal
Sunset Years	5 years

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

- Article I, Section 8, Clause 1
- Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
- Tenth Amendment
- Fifth Amendment Due Process

Concerns with the measure as written:

- Article I, Section 8 limits federal education action to spending for the general welfare plus laws necessary and proper to carry it out, so direct federal operation of campus aid raises federalism and Tenth Amendment concerns.
 - Fifth Amendment Due Process calls for clear eligibility standards, notice, and review before funds are denied or recovered.
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WHY BOTH SIDES CAN BACK IT (VFA'S ASSESSMENT)

VFA assesses this draft gives Republicans enforceable fiscal discipline, state and campus control, and a ban on open-ended federal administration, with capped funds and a sunset. It gives Democrats rapid help for students facing sudden costs that can force them to drop out, with clear grant rules and public reporting on whether funds reached students in need.

Strongest objection, and the answer: The strongest objection is that Washington would run campus aid; this proposal answers it by leaving daily decisions with colleges and states, with a firm cap and a five-year sunset.

CHECK BEFORE RELYING ON THIS

Basis: The official Congress.gov summary of H.R. 10451 in the 119th Congress states the bill would direct the Department of Education to create grants for colleges to provide emergency grants to students, and would bar transfer of program functions to other agencies. The official record states the bill was referred to the House Committee on Education and Workforce.

The official summary does not supply the full bill text, eligibility rules, appeal rights, cost effects, or current law. Readers should verify grant terms, student eligibility, administrative limits, and program status at the Congress.gov bill page before treating this draft as a full account.

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