

MARCH 20TH, 2024

HEINRICH, STANSBURY, CHAVEZ-DEREMER INTRODUCE BILL TO SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

WASHINGTON — Today, U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) and U.S. Representatives Melanie Stansbury (D-N.M) and Lori Chavez-Deremer (R-Ore.) introduced the Postsecondary Student Success Act, legislation to support evidence-based practices that support student retention, completion, and success in postsecondary education.

Over the past two decades, there has been a significant increase in high school graduation and college enrollment rates, reflecting a concerted effort to expand access to higher education. However, despite these strides, there remains a troubling reality: a significant number of students who embark on their college journey, whether at two-year or four-year institutions, falter before completing their degrees. Currently, only 62% of college enrollees nationwide successfully achieve their educational aspirations.

The Postsecondary Student Success Act will provide investments in evidence-based initiatives aimed at enhancing retention and completion rates. This includes empowering individuals through support programs tailored to address the challenges that impede students' progress from enrollment to graduation.

"Every New Mexican deserves a fair shot at success. With the Postsecondary Student Success Act, we're moving one step closer to making this goal a reality — unlocking the long-term success that can come from higher education," **said Heinrich**. "By removing the barriers students run into when completing their education, this legislation will help more New Mexicans graduate, achieve economic stability, and thrive in their communities."

"It's unacceptable that only 62% of college students end up achieving their college goals," **said Stansbury**. "With the Post Secondary Success Act, student veterans, first-generation, low income, and students from historically underrepresented communities, and students with disabilities will finally get the opportunity to achieve their educational goals. This bill builds off the leadership of Governor Lujan Grisham and the state Legislature who made college universal for everyone in New Mexico. It's past time we support those who are shaping their own futures!"

"By providing critical resources and aid to students, the Postsecondary Student Success Grant program is helping countless students attend and graduate college — supporting them as they work toward fulfilling their dreams," **said Chavez-DeRemer**. "Our bipartisan legislation will strengthen the program to unlock even more opportunities in higher education, including for first-generation and low-income students. I was the first person in my family to graduate college, and I recognize the importance of supporting methods that are proven to help new students succeed."

The Postsecondary Student Success Act of 2024 will remove barriers that stand in the way of students' academic success by permanently reauthorizing the Postsecondary Student Success Grant program. The bill authorizes funding to colleges and universities for evidence-based retention programs, such as:

- Providing faculty and peer counseling services;
- Incentivizing students to re-enroll and stay on track;
- Collecting real-time data on student progress;
- Providing direct student support services including tutoring and academic supports;
- Preparing students for a career by providing career coaching and counseling;
- Lowering student to advisor ratios;
- Recruiting and lowering faculty and other instructional staff; and
- Reform developmental education, including utilizing career pathways and improving transfer student success.

The bill is endorsed by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, Complete Collage America, Campaign for College Opportunity, National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP), New America, Results for America, State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, The Education Trust, The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS), Third Way, and UnidosUS.

A one-page summary of the bill is [here](#).

The text of the bill is [here](#).

Statements of Support

"Completing a college degree is essential to unlocking the full benefits postsecondary education can offer. Third Way applauds Senator Heinrich, Representative Stansbury, and Representative Chavez-DeRemer for introducing the Postsecondary Student Success Act, which will help colleges and universities deploy evidence-based strategies to raise their retention and graduation rates. We're thrilled to see growing bipartisan focus on college student success and urge Congress to pass this important legislation," **said Michelle Dimino, Director of Education at Third Way**.

"IHEP applauds Sen. Heinrich for introducing the Postsecondary Student Success Act of 2024 and for his commitment to student success. We are pleased this bill will codify the Postsecondary Student Success Grant program and help postsecondary institutions develop, implement, and scale evidence-based college retention and completion approaches. These efforts will improve student outcomes and increase the public return on investment in higher education, promising a brighter future for our nation's students," **said the Institute for Higher Education Policy.**

"TICAS is proud to support the Postsecondary Student Success Act of 2024, and we applaud the leadership of Senator Heinrich, Representative Stansbury, and Representative Chavez-DeRemer. This bipartisan legislation builds on previous federal investments in evidence-based programs to improve student outcomes--including retention, transfer, credit accumulation, and completion. Across the country, comprehensive approaches to student success have proven that they can help more students achieve their dream of getting a college credential, avoiding the personal and professional challenges that accompany having student debt without a degree. However, only a tiny fraction of students receive these transformational supports. That's why TICAS has long advocated for the authorization of the Postsecondary Student Success Grant program to provide sustained funding for evidence-based completion programs. We urge Congress to move this legislation forward as soon as possible," **said Dr. Jhenai Chandler, Senior Director of College Completion, The Institute for College Access & Success.**

"EdTrust hails the Postsecondary Student Success Act of 2024, introduced by Reps. Stansbury and Chavez-DeRemer, and Sen. Heinrich, and expresses our unqualified support for the bill. This legislation would strengthen the current Postsecondary Student Success Grant program and demonstrates strong bipartisan support for evidenced-based student success programs. These types of innovations provide the supports that students need to stay enrolled in school and graduate and have outsized benefits for students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. We urge Congress and the President to act on behalf of underserved students and enact this bill," **said Wil Del Pilar, Senior Vice President, The Education Trust.**

"We thank Senator Heinrich, Representative Stansbury, and Representative Chavez DeRemer for introducing the Postsecondary Student Success Act," **said Mark Becker, President of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities.** "This legislation would enable critical gains in student success and help ensure more students graduate faster with the skills they need to thrive in the workforce and contribute to society. We urge Congress to pass the Postsecondary Student Success Act, and provide significant funding for the Postsecondary Student Success Grant program in the next education spending bill."

"New America applauds the introduction of the Postsecondary Student Success Act. The bill will provide colleges with much needed resources to help their students get across the finish line, and its emphasis on evidence ensures that taxpayers' dollars are invested in effective, proven practices," **said New America.**

"Results for America applauds the introduction of the Postsecondary Student Success Act, which will authorize an innovation fund to test and scale promising strategies that promote college completion and student success. This bill will not only support learning about what works to help students graduate from college, it will improve economic mobility outcomes in communities across the country." **Michele Jolin, CEO and co-founder, Results for America**

"We are delighted to see a bipartisan, bicameral effort to authorize the Postsecondary Student Success Grant," **said Jee Hang Lee, President and CEO at the Association of Community College Trustees.** "ACCT has long advocated for a federal program specifically designed to enhance college completion and student success through evidence-based practices and partnerships. We are glad to see the program authorized to make its need known to both appropriators and authorizers. As open-access yet often under-resourced institutions, community colleges look forward to continuing to leverage this program to bolster students' abilities to succeed in postsecondary education."

Background

Heinrich is a champion of legislative solutions to promote college completion in a thoughtful, innovative, and comprehensive way that address longstanding inequities in college access and success.

During his time on the Senate Appropriations Committee, Heinrich successfully helped to establish and fund the Postsecondary Student Success Grants Program at the U.S. Department of Education. In total, Heinrich has secured \$50 million in funding for the Postsecondary Student Success Grant. In July, Heinrich announced he had included an additional \$45 million for the grant in the FY24 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies bill, which awaits House and Senate passage.

The Postsecondary Student Success Grant is based on legislation that Heinrich introduced in 2021 called the College Completion Fund Act, which would provide states with formula funding to higher education institutions to increase graduation and completion rates for all students enrolled at all public colleges and universities.

###