



## AccessLex Institute Applauds Congress' Bipartisan Efforts to Support Students Through Passage of the *FUTURE Act*

WASHINGTON, D.C., December 17, 2019 — AccessLex Institute is pleased to offer our support for the *Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act*, which would permanently reauthorize \$255 million in annual funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other minority-serving institutions, simplify the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and streamline the process for verifying the income of struggling borrowers applying for and looking to remain enrolled in income-driven repayment (IDR) plans.

With its length and complexity, the existing FAFSA can create unnecessary barriers for prospective students, particularly low-income students, seeking to advance their education. By allowing the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to provide students' tax information to the Department of Education (ED), the *FUTURE Act* would reduce the number of questions on the application. Removing this barrier without sacrificing the data and information that the federal government and institutions require to assess financial need is critical to ensuring that students can afford higher education.

Additionally, requiring the exchange of information between ED and the IRS would streamline the IDR process by eliminating the requirement that borrowers submit annual paperwork to verify their income. Despite IDR plans often being the best option for struggling borrowers, the process of staying enrolled can be challenging because of the strict deadlines to keep their income information current in order to continue to qualify for affordable payments each year. Allowing for this information exchange ensures that borrowers remain in cost-effective IDR plans and avoid payment increases that they cannot afford.

While the *FUTURE Act* is not the comprehensive reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) that so many students desperately need, AccessLex is heartened to see Congress working in a bipartisan manner to pass legislation that will benefit students. We are optimistic that the same can be done to further increase access and affordability of higher education and we encourage Congress to continue developing a comprehensive, bipartisan HEA proposal that addresses the needs of today's students as they navigate the rapidly changing higher education system.

See our full set of Higher Education Act policy recommendations [here](#).

See our proposed guiding principles for Higher Education Act reauthorization [here](#).

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**About AccessLex Institute:**

AccessLex Institute is a nonprofit organization committed to helping talented, purpose-driven students find their path from aspiring lawyer to fulfilled professional. In partnership with its nearly 200 ABA-approved Member law schools, improving access and positively influencing legal education have been at the heart of the Company's mission since 1983. The AccessLex Center for Legal Education Excellence® advocates for policies that make legal education work better for students and society alike, and conducts research on the most critical issues facing legal education today. The AccessLex Center for Education and Financial Capability® offers on-campus and online financial education programming and resources to help students confidently manage their finances on their way to achieving personal and professional success. AccessLex Institute has offices in West Chester, PA, and Washington, D.C., with a team of accredited financial education counselors based throughout the United States. Learn more at [AccessLex.org](https://www.accesslex.org).