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MAINTAINING A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD FOR D.C. GRADUATES: LEGISLATION TO REAUTHORIZE THE D.C. COLLEGE ACCESS ACT

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

H.R. 4012

TO AMEND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE ACCESS ACT OF 1999 TO PERMANENTLY AUTHORIZE THE PUBLIC SCHOOL AND PRIVATE SCHOOL TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED UNDER THE ACT

MARCH 25, 2004

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MAINTAINING A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD FOR D.C. GRADUATES: LEGISLATION TO REAUTHORIZE THE D.C. COLLEGE ACCESS ACT

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2004

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:10 a.m., in room 2154 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Tom Davis of Virginia (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Tom Davis of Virginia, Waxman, and Norton.

Staff present: Melissa Wojciak, staff director; David Marin, deputy staff director and director of communications; John Hunter, counsel; Robert Borden, counsel/parliamentarian; Drew Crockett, deputy director of communications; John Cuaderes, senior professional staff member; Mason Alinger and Shalley Kim, professional staff members; Teresa Austin, chief clerk; Brien Beattie, deputy clerk; Corinne Zaccagnini, chief information officer; Phil Barnett, minority staff director; Kristin Amerling, minority deputy chief counsel; Karen Lightfoot, minority communications director/senior policy advisor; Michelle Ash, minority senior legislative counsel; Earley Green, minority chief clerk; Jean Gosa, minority assistant clerk.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Good morning. The committee will come to order.

I want to welcome everybody to today's hearing to discuss the reauthorization of the District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Grant Program. The purpose of the hearing is to highlight the tremendous impact the tuition assistance program has had on promoting higher education for high school graduates in the Nation's Capital.

The original aim of the program in 1999 was to provide D.C. high school graduates the same opportunity that college bound seniors in each of the 50 States have, specifically a network of State supported institutions to attend at a relatively low cost. The program sought to level the playing field for D.C. residents who do not have access to a similar State supported system.

To accomplish this, the Tuition Assistance Grant Program covers the difference between in State and out of State tuition rates for District high school graduates at public colleges and universities throughout the Nation. The program also provides limited financial assistance to D.C. high school graduates attending private schools

in the D.C. metropolitan area as well as students who attend private historically Black colleges and universities in other States.

Given that the original authorization for the program expires after next year, Congresswoman Norton and I introduced H.R. 4012 on Tuesday to reauthorize the D.C. College Access Act. After all, the need for the program that existed in 1999 continues to exist today. The impact of the grant program on the capital city is undeniable. Data from the Department of Education's integrated postsecondary education data system showed that the number of D.C. high school graduates continuing on to college increased from 1,750 in 1998 to 2,230 in 2002. That's a 28 percent increase since the program was created. Compare that to the national average over the same period, 5 percent increase.

Granted, there are a number of factors that help explain this rise, but a person would be hard pressed to deny the role of the D.C. tuition assistance program. According to a survey conducted by the program, the vast majority of students who have received assistance through the program have indicated that the existence of the grants made a difference in their decision to attend college and was a key factor in deciding which college to attend.

Operating hand in hand with the publicly funded D.C. tuition assistance program is the D.C. College Access Program, an endeavor created and funded by the private sector to promote higher education in the District by offering last dollar financial assistance and college counseling to D.C. high school students. The double punch provided by the Mayor's D.C. tuition assistance program and the private sector's D.C. College Access Program is clearly having a tremendous impact on the educational opportunities available to D.C. high school students, and it's equally clear that students are becoming more aware of and choosing to take advantage of these opportunities.

As the committee moves forward with the consideration of H.R. 4012, I look forward to hearing from the witnesses their first hand accounts of how this program has improved the quality of education in the Nation's Capital, and what should be done to improve the program in the future. I want to especially welcome Mayor Williams here this morning. He was instrumental in the original passage of the legislation and he has been committed to the success of the program from the beginning.

Leveling the playing field for high school graduates in the District of Columbia continues to be a top priority for me, as chairman of the committee that has oversight responsibility for the District of Columbia. After all, I represent a neighboring jurisdiction, and I've always believed that you can't have a healthy region without a healthy city. Our destinies are intertwined, and you can't have one school system across the river where you're sending 90 percent of the kids to college each year with great varieties and choices of State university systems and across the river deny them the same kind of opportunities. That's what this is all about, one Nation, one region, indivisible.

I welcome the witnesses here today to discuss this important issue, and last, I want to welcome the students, counselors and financial aid officers in the audience this morning who have come to show their support for this program. It's great to have you here.

Mr. Waxman.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Tom Davis and the text of H.R. 4012 follow:]

"Maintaining a Level Playing Field for D.C. Graduates: Legislation to Reauthorize the D.C. College Access Act"

Opening Statement of Chairman Davis
Committee on Government Reform
March 25, 2003, 10:00 a.m.
Room 2154 Rayburn House Office Building

Good morning. I would like to welcome everyone to today's hearing to discuss the reauthorization of the District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Grant Program. The purpose of the hearing is to highlight the tremendous impact the Tuition Assistance Program has had on promoting higher education for high school graduates in the Nation's Capital.

The original aim of the Program in 1999 was to provide D.C. high school graduates the same opportunity that college bound seniors in each of the 50 states have, specifically a network of state-supported institutions to attend at relatively low cost. The Program sought to level the playing field for D.C. residents, who do not have access to a similar state-supported system.

To accomplish this, the Tuition Assistance Grant Program covers the difference between in-State and out-of-State tuition rates for District high school graduates at public colleges and universities throughout the nation. The Program also provides limited financial assistance to D.C. high school graduates attending private schools in the D.C. metropolitan area, as well as students who attend private Historically Black Colleges and Universities in other states.

Given that the original five-year authorization for the Program expires after next year, Congresswoman Norton and I introduced H.R. 4012 on Tuesday to reauthorize the D.C. College Access Act. After all, the need for the Program that existed in 1999 continues to exist today.

The impact of the Grant Program on the Capital City is undeniable. Data from the Department of Education's "Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System" show that the number of D.C. high school graduates continuing on to college increased from 1,750 in 1998 to 2,230 in 2002 – that's a 28% increase since the Program was created. Compare that to the national average, over the same period, of a 5 percent increase. Granted, there are a number of factors that help to explain this rise, but a person would be hard pressed to deny the role of the D.C. Tuition Assistance Program. According to a survey conducted by the program, the vast majority of students who have received assistance through the program have indicated that the existence of the grants made a difference in their decision to attend college, and were a key factor in deciding which college to attend.

Operating hand-in-hand with the publicly funded D.C. Tuition Assistance Program is the D.C. College Access Program, an endeavor created and funded by the private sector to promote higher education in the District by offering last dollar financial

assistance and college counseling to D.C. high school students. The "double punch" provided by the Mayor's D.C. Tuition Assistance Program and the private sector's D.C. College Access Program is clearly having a tremendous impact on the educational opportunities available to D.C. high school students, and it is equally clear that students are becoming more aware of and choosing to take advantage of these opportunities.

As the Committee moves forward with consideration of H.R. 4012, I look forward to hearing from the witnesses their firsthand accounts of how this program has improved the quality of education in the Nation's Capital, and what should be done to improve the Program in the future. I would especially like to welcome Mayor Williams here this morning. He was instrumental in the original passage of the legislation and has been committed to the success of the Program from the beginning.

Leveling the playing field for high school graduates in the District of Columbia continues to be a top priority for me as Chairman of the Committee that has oversight responsibility for the District of Columbia. After all, I represent a neighboring jurisdiction and I have always believed that you cannot have a healthy region without a healthy city. I welcome the witnesses here today to discuss this important issue.

I

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4012

To amend the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999 to permanently authorize the public school and private school tuition assistance programs established under the Act.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 23, 2004

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia (for himself and Ms. NORTON) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Government Reform

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A BILL

To amend the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999 to permanently authorize the public school and private school tuition assistance programs established under the Act.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PERMANENT AUTHORIZATION OF TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

(a) PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAM.—Section 3(i) of the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999 (sec. 38—2702(i), D.C. Official Code) is amended by striking

1 "each of the five succeeding fiscal years" and inserting
2 "each succeeding fiscal year".
3 (b) PRIVATE SCHOOL PROGRAM.—Section 5(f) of
4 such Act (sec. 38—2704(f), D.C. Official Code) is amend-
5 ed by striking "each of the five succeeding fiscal years"
6 and inserting "each succeeding fiscal year".

○

Mr. WAXMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. I want to commend you and Ms. Norton for your continued support for the District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Grant Program, the DC TAG. DC TAG provides grants for undergraduate District students to attend eligible public universities and colleges nationwide at in-State tuition rates. In addition, it provides smaller grants for students to attend private institutions in the D.C. metropolitan area and private historically Black colleges and universities nationwide.

DC TAG is providing D.C. high school graduates with wonderful higher educational opportunities. Not only is it allowing graduates to attend schools that they otherwise would not have been able to attend, it has helped many graduates attend college who otherwise would not have attended college at all. The statistics demonstrate its success. DC TAG has helped 6,527 students pay for college. DC TAG recipients attend schools in 46 States. The students are from all over the District, with wards four, five and seven having the highest percentage of DC TAG students. Over half those students participating in DC TAG state that they are the first in their immediate families to attend college.

As a Member of Congress from California, I understand the value of higher education choice. California high school graduates who want to attend a public higher education institution have the opportunity to consider many community colleges, Cal State schools, and the University of California system schools. High school graduates in the District of Columbia also need choices.

As Congress moves forward with reauthorization of the DC TAG Program, I'm mindful that, just like students in the District, students in California and in all States are struggling due to the increasing costs of higher education. I hope Congress will also support helping all students afford college through mechanisms such as grants, loan and tax deductibility. I also understand that the States are struggling to pay for their share of these costs. The states pay the greatest share of the expenses for the public schools for higher education, I hope that we, in Washington, when developing policies do not ignore the States' economic needs, but assist them so that they can, especially in this time of economic downturn, still keep faith with the students in their public universities, colleges and schools.

I look forward to the testimony from our distinguished witnesses on the important matter at hand. I also look forward to quickly marking up H.R. 4012, the bill reauthorizing DC TAG. I commend Ms. Norton and Mr. Davis, both from this region, Ms. Norton representing the District of Columbia, for their leadership in establishing the program in the first place, and their deep commitment to continuing it. This compliments to the students that will have an opportunity, as I indicated, many for the first time in their families, to get a higher education.

That is so important, it's what this country is all about, the opportunity to move up in the economic ladder, to have every chance to succeed and to fulfill your ambitions. That seems to me what this country is all about. And for those who can't afford it, we need to make it available to them. Thank you very much.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you very much.

And Ms. Norton, you were in on the creation of this and very instrumental. Any opening comments?

Ms. NORTON. Yes, Mr. Chairman. I won't say I'm the mother and you're the father, because I don't know what that would imply. [Laughter.]

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your early scheduling of this hearing on the reauthorization of the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999, which funds the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant Program [TAG], affording ample time to get the bill through the House and the Senate. It would be difficult to cite a bill that is as universally popular among residents of all backgrounds in the District. Although our $5,000 homebuyer tax credit, allowing $5,000 to be deducted from the income taxes of residents buying a home in D.C. is another congressional bill that has had similar city-wide appeal.

However, the D.C. College Access Act provides simultaneous and immediate benefits to both District residents and to the city itself. The DC TAG recipients range from residents for whom college was more of a dream than a possibility to residents who might otherwise have moved to the Maryland or Virginia suburbs, and along with them, more of the District's already depleted tax base. The rising cost of tuition is a significant reason why many residents left and others refused to settle here, rather than in Maryland or Virginia, which each has more than 30 different kinds of colleges and universities to fit the specific needs and interests of residents.

D.C. has only one public university, the vital University of the District of Columbia. I am pleased that because of the DC TAG bill, we were able to get UDC funded on an annual basis as an HBCU for the first time in its history.

I am particularly grateful to you, Mr. Chairman, and to Ranking Member Waxman, as well as to Senators George Voinovich, Mary Landrieu and Dick Durban for your leadership efforts in obtaining and sustaining TAG. And to President Bush, who came to office several years after the bill was in effect, saw the evidence of its success and has continued to fund it in his budget at authorized levels.

The evidence of the success of the program and return on the dollar to residents and to the city itself is not in dispute. Close monitoring by the GAO and by our office has shown that TAG has generally been well run. Nevertheless, we will be interested in learning whether 5 years of experience suggests any significant operational improvement. Perhaps the most important issue before us today, however, is the financial viability of TAG going forward. The growth of the program has been phenomenal. It would be unfortunate if projected shortfalls of $10.2 million in the next fiscal year and up to $34 million in shortfall in fiscal year 2008 forced a change in the nature and structure of the program itself.

If for example TAG subsidizes only a part of in-State tuition, its value to many residents who cannot afford college and its use as an incentive in attracting and maintaining tax paying residents will diminish. The $17 million amount used in 1999 as we pressed for this bill was a best guess. It was a pretty good guess. Because despite rapid growth in TAG recipients, the program still fully funds the amount provided to every student. The manifest success

of the program and its benefits to residents and to the District's economy argues strongly for every effort to ensure that TAG keeps abreast of inflation and of the demand for education by parents and students.

As we are all aware, tuition at State colleges has increased dramatically during the poor economy of the last 3 years. I have been amazed by the huge increases in tuition that State legislatures have been quick to approve, forcing many students to drop out, postpone or perhaps never attend college. Rising tuition costs would make TAG worthless for many of our young people in D.C. who use it. Students who attend private colleges in this expensive city and region receive only $2,500, a helpful amount, but one that also must be reviewed in the context of rapidly rising tuition costs.

I welcome not only Mayor Williams and Kelly Valentine, the Acting Director of the program, but especially our witnesses who can testify about TAG's real life effects, possibilities and problems. The privately funded D.C. College Access Program, whose director, Argelia Rodriguez, will also testify, has been a perfect match for TAG. CAP's last dollar funding is a welcome financial supplement, but CAP's work is particularly invaluable in helping D.C. students maneuver through the often byzantine issues that face students who may be the first in their families to attend college.

I look forward to learning more about TAG and CAP from those who have taken the program on paper and made it work for the D.C. residents and hearing from the D.C. residents who have put these programs to good use. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you very much.

And our first witness we have, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, who was instrumental in helping set this up, the Honorable Tony Williams. Tony, would you raise your hand with me?

[Witness sworn.]

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you. Thanks for taking the time to come today and thanks for your leadership in this issue.

STATEMENT OF ANTHONY A. WILLIAMS, MAYOR, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mayor WILLIAMS. Chairman Davis and Congresswoman Norton, I want to recognize you and thank both of you for your leadership in general and certainly for your leadership and partnership as, what is it, mother and father of this program, for pulling it together.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. That's how rumors get started. [Laughter.]

Mayor WILLIAMS. And I certainly want to acknowledge Congressman Waxman not only for his partnership with us on activities like this, but also for his leadership on the environment. We've certainly learned a lot of lessons over the last couple of weeks, and his leadership over the years I think is really coming to the fore now. I want to thank all of you for that.

Another person I really want to mention who really played a leadership role with the both of you in putting this together was the great, late Kay Graham who leaned on a lot of people to help get this program forward. I think this is just another legacy of all the wonderful things she did in our city. I certainly want to ac-

knowledge her and the continuing work of the Graham family on this.

And last but not least, as you've mentioned, Mr. Chairman, all the great folks who have actually benefited from this program who can testify to that today. All of us are pleased to have the opportunity to present testimony on the Tuition Assistance Grant Program, and I'm pleased to be here to answer your questions.

Since its inception, DC TAG has awarded over $63 million to District residents with higher education goals. As you consider reauthorization of the program, I believe it would be useful to examine if DC TAG has achieved its primary goal of expanding both the number of D.C. residents attending college and the choice of postsecondary institutions available to them. Very simply, I think the answer to both of these questions is a resounding, affirmative yes. Quite simply, were it not for this program, thousands of D.C. families could not have afforded to send their sons and daughters to college, and moreover, many families would have been faced with very limited options in terms of where their children went to school.

The evidence before us is really quite compelling. For example, more D.C. residents are attending college than ever before. Between 1998 and 2002, the number of D.C. high school graduates who enrolled as freshmen in colleges and universities nationwide has increased by 28 percent. No State in the Union can make that claim. This unprecedented figure is due in large part, if not almost exclusively, I believe, to DC TAG and the expanded opportunities for D.C. residents that result.

For many families, their children are first generation college attendees. I think you'll hear testimony on this today. A survey among Woodson High School graduates, and I've been over to the Tower of Power, as we say, and talked to students, a survey among Woodson High School graduates using the program shows that more than 50 percent of those students are first in their families to go to college. Besides being an enormous source of pride for these families, this fact demonstrates, I think, a lot for the educational attainment of their siblings, other children and grandchildren to follow. Indeed, I believe it can significantly improve economic development and other societal factors in neighborhoods that have been plagued by chronic underdevelopment, unemployment and limited education attainment.

Another fact for District families, DC TAG has made college considerably more affordable. In fact, during the 1999–2000 school year, undergraduates from the District paid more than twice the national average to attend public institutions outside the District, while during the 2000–2001 school year, not only did DC TAG level the playing field, but students saved thousands of dollars in college costs.

Another fact, DC TAG has become an essential element in higher eduction planning for our families. All together, more than 6,500 students have received tuition assistance since 2000. The number of awards for current school year is more than 4,000, twice the number of awards in our first year.

Now, our students have attended more than 300 institutions in 46 States, including nationally recognized public institutions, such as University of Virginia and the University of Michigan at Ann

Arbor, as well as many public historically Black colleges and universities. I mentioned Virginia State, Delaware State, plus HBCUs such as Morehouse and Spellman in Hampton, and local jewels like our own Georgetown University, Howard University, Trinity College and University of Maryland at College Park.

Participation in the program represents a full diversity of the city, with representation across the city's wards. This was a concern when this was started, and I think this has been addressed by experience. Our outreach efforts have been successful insofar as the participants represent young people from all ethnic backgrounds and income levels as well as students from virtually every public and non-public high school where District residents attend. And as we seek to improve the prospects of our current residents and expand our base of tax paying citizens, the TAG Program is an important tool for economic and social development.

We are excited about the prospect that these graduates will utilize their experiences and newly minted degrees at home here in the District. The academic success of these students hold great promise that they will return to our city as catalysts to sustain the social and economic changes that are really prerequisites for the city to realize its position as a leader in this new economy.

In many ways, though, DC TAG is a victim of its own success. As previously mentioned, our residents are attending college at record levels. That's great. They're attending colleges across the country, including some of our most prestigious. That's great. Beyond the rising number of participants, we're faced with significant increases in public tuition costs across the country. The impact on the program's budget as shown by the fact that in our first year, under $10 million in awards were issued while this year it will be closer to $21 million.

So we're facing a situation with great demand, which is great, we're also facing a situation with higher costs across the country. And you mentioned, both you and Congresswoman Norton mentioned this higher cost issue in your statements.

With your increased support, though, we anticipate that over the next 5 years, DC TAG will grant over 30,000 awards. Specifically, we'll need annual appropriation of at least $25.5 million, roughly, $25.6 million exactly, to enable us to continue offering the same level of benefits to new graduates. Without such an increase, we will be faced with several very unpleasant possibilities. And they really are unpleasant when you put it against the backdrop of all the great things that have happened here.

What are they? Well, decreasing the lifetime award maximum, reducing the yearly maximum awards and/or converting the DC TAG to a needs based program. We know that this would limit participation in the program and otherwise narrow the choices available to our residents.

Now, legislators might ask if it's not reasonable for the city to use local funds to sustain the program. Mr. Chairman, such sentiment I think ignores the basic premise of the program, namely that the relatively small population of the District and the federally imposed constrictions on fiscal condition preclude us from funding the sort of post-secondary institutions that our citizens deserve. We have our UDC, we've struggled to fund our UDC adequately. But

we need a full range of choices of our students. This program helps to level the playing field by granting D.C. residents the sorts of options enjoyed by residents of other States.

Our own public university, as I said, is constrained by both funding and scale from offering our residents a full educational menu. As long as Congress continues to limit the city's tax base, and impose financial burdens, situations that are directly related to denial of voting representation, we are unable to fund this important program. Few cities across the country have the responsibility of providing a higher education network for their residents. All cities in the country can rely upon their State capital to provide this kind of service. No city in America does what we do, no State government to administer a university system and no financial base to make up the difference.

So I strongly urge you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, to reauthorize this program and to work with us to ensure through the appropriation committees that we ensure full funding to make this program available to all District citizens and residents, make it available to our families regardless of need, wherever they live in our great city. With that, I'd be happy to answer your questions and look forward to working with you in the future on this important program.

[The prepared statement of Mayor Williams follows:]

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Committee on Government Reform
United States House of Representatives

Congressman Thomas M. Davis, III, Chairman
Congressman Henry A. Waxman, Ranking Member

"Maintaining a Level Playing Field for D.C. Graduates Reauthorization of the D.C. College Access Act"

Statement of
Anthony A. Williams
Mayor
District of Columbia

Thursday, March 25, 2004
2154 Rayburn House Office Building
10:00 a.m.

Chairman Davis, Congresswoman Norton, and members of this distinguished committee, I am pleased to have the opportunity to present testimony on the District of Columbia's Tuition Assistance Grant Program. Both of you were responsible for the creation of this program and were intimately involved in its launching. I am pleased to be here before you, five years later, to affirm that the program has actually exceeded the expectations and has profoundly influenced the lives of thousands of District families.

Thanks to your tireless efforts, as well as the efforts of other members of the House and Senate, the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999 was signed into law on November 12, 1999. A short time later a Mayoral Order created the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant Program (DC TAG) to carry out the requirements of the legislation. Just a few months later, applications were disseminated and by the fall 2000 nearly 2000 undergraduates were attending college under this program. Since its inception, DC TAG has awarded over $63 million dollars to District residents with higher education goals.

As you consider reauthorizing the program, I believe it would be useful to examine if DC TAG has achieved its primary goals of expanding both the

number of DC residents attending college and the choice of post-secondary institutions available to them. Very simply, the answer is a resounding "yes." Quite simply, were it not for this program, thousands of DC families could not have afforded to send their sons and daughters to college. Moreover, many families would have been faced with very limited options in terms of where their children could attend school.

The evidence before us is quite compelling. For example:

More DC residents are attending college than ever before. Between 1998 and 2002, the number of DC high school graduates who enrolled as freshmen in colleges and universities nationwide has increased by 28%. No state in the union can make that claim. This unprecedented figure is due in large part, if not almost exclusively, to DC TAG and the expanded opportunities for DC residents as a result of this program.

For many families, their sons and daughters are first generation college attendees. A survey among Woodson High School graduates using the program shows that more than 50% of those students are first in their families to go to college. Besides being an enormous source of pride for these families, this fact promises much for the educational attainment of

their siblings, other children and grandchildren to follow. Indeed, this can significantly improve economic development and other societal factors in neighborhoods plagued with chronic underdevelopment and limited educational attainment.

For District families, DC TAG has made college considerably more affordable. In fact, during the 1999/2000 school year undergraduates from the District of Columbia paid more than twice the national average to attend public institutions outside the District, while during the 2000/2001 school year not only did DC TAG level the playing field, but students saved thousands of dollars in college costs.

DC TAG has become an essential element in higher education planning for District residents. Altogether, more than 6500 students have received tuition assistance since 2000. The number of awards for current school year is more than 4000 – twice the number awards in our first year.

Our students have attended more than 300 institutions in 46 states, including nationally recognized public institutions like the University of Virginia, the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, the University of California-Berkeley

and Rutgers University, as well as many public Historically Black Colleges and Universities, such as Virginia State University, Morgan State University, North Carolina Agriculture & Technical, and Delaware State; private HBCUs, such as Morehouse, Spellman, and Hampton Universities, and local jewels like Georgetown University, Howard University, Trinity College, and the University of Maryland College Park.

Participation in the program represents the full diversity of the city, with representation across the city's eight wards. Our outreach efforts have been successful insofar as the participants represent young people from all ethnic backgrounds and income levels, as well as students from virtually every public and nonpublic high school where District residents attend. As we seek to improve the prospects of our current residents and expand our base of tax paying citizens, the DCTAG Program is an important tool for economic and social development.

We are excited about the prospect that DC TAG graduates will utilize their experiences and newly minted degrees at home in the Nation's Capital. The academic success of these students holds the promise that they will return to the city as catalysts to sustain the social and economic changes that are

prerequisites for this city to realize its position as a leader in this new economy.

Our DC TAG students venture out of the city leveraging this educational opportunity while exposing their new environments to a distinct set of experiences, values and culture. They are also absorbing new ideas and ways of being, which serve to strengthen the communities that they call home. The District is fully engaged in an economic revitalization and poised for this social transformation.

Not only does DC TAG support our students who are venturing out of the city for education, but it also supports educational aides, often community anchors, who are working in the District's school systems. Specifically, the amended changes to the original legislation opened the classrooms at local universities to support our city's educational aides as they strive to meet the 60 college credit requirement of the No Child Left Behind legislation. The Catholic University of America's Para-education program is a pioneer in this endeavor.

Today you will hear testimony from Brian Ford, a graduate of Eastern High School. DC TAG enabled him to complete his studies at the University of Delaware. Brian is a financial aid professional at Trinity College. He is truly a living example of the investment in education that is now paying dividends in his home community, Washington, D.C.

In many ways, DC TAG is a victim of its own success. As previously mentioned, District residents are attending college at record levels. They are attending colleges across the country, including some of the country's most prestigious. Beyond the rising number of participants, we are faced with significant increases in public tuition costs across the country. The impact on the program's budget is shown by the fact that in our first year, under $10 million in awards were issued, while this year it will be closer to $21 million.

With your increased support, we anticipate that over the next five years DC TAG will grant over 30,000 awards. Specifically, we will need annual appropriation of at least $25.6 million to enable us to continue offering the same level of benefits to new graduates. Without such an increase, we would be faced with several very unpleasant possibilities: decreasing the

lifetime award maximum, reducing yearly maximum awards , and/or converting DC TAG to a needs based program. We know that this would limit participation in the program and otherwise narrow the choices available to our residents.

Legislators might ask if it is not reasonable for the city to use local funds to sustain the program. Mr. Chairman, such sentiment ignores the basic premise for the program, namely that the relatively small population of the District and the federally imposed constrictions on its fiscal condition, preclude it from funding the sort of post-secondary institutions that its citizens deserve. This program helps to level the playing field by granting DC residents the sort of options enjoyed by residents of other states. Our own public university, the University of the District of Columbia, is constrained by both funding and scale from offering our residents a full educational menu.

As long as Congress continues to limit the city's tax base and impose onerous financial burdens – situations that are directly related to the denial of voting representation in the Congress – we are unable to fund this important program. Few cities across the America have the responsibility of

providing a higher education network for their residents. All cities in the country can rely upon their state capital to provide a host of post-secondary institutions. No city in America faces what the District does – no state government to administer a university system and no financial base to make up the difference.

Mr. Chairman, for all these reasons it is entirely appropriate for the Congress to help the city maintain its virtual university system for our residents and to take tremendous pride and satisfaction in what you have made possible during the first five years of the DC Tuition Assistance Grant Program. I strongly urge you to reauthorize this program and continue this partnership, which is allowing our long-neglected young people to soar to new heights. I am confident that years from now you will be able to look back and say this program was an important part of our shared journey to turn this city into a national jewel and reverse years of educational and economic despair in this great city.

We are committed to sharpening our focus to improve college retention rates. We have a long- standing relationship with the DC College Access Program (DC CAP) who provides college and financial aid counseling and

college preparation assistance to DCPS students and their families. In cooperation with DC CAP, we are monitoring college retention rates and implementing strategies to ensure that we are not just sending students to college, but that we are also addressing any non-financial issues that could derail their college careers. This is a perfect example of public/private partnerships working towards the greater good of our city. We are also appreciative of the support and flexibility of the local university community as we have undertaken this work.

In conclusion, I appreciate the opportunity to testify and welcome any questions that you may have.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Mayor Williams, thank you very much.

We talked about the city's responsibility for higher education, if we didn't come in. Every other city in the United States has a State that they share responsibility with. And higher education has been a State responsibility. The District doesn't. I mean, it's that simple, when you take a look at this. We couldn't expect the city to have the kind of education system at the higher levels that States offer. And this was just an attempt to level the playing field, quite frankly.

So I think your point is very well taken. I think this is a congressional responsibility. My opinion is that the program ought to probably be enhanced. I was just taking a look at the colleges and universities that the kids in the city have gone to, and it's a very impressive array of universities. Members need to understand that this helps a lot of their schools back home, when you have kids coming here, paying the full boat in terms of them making their numbers work.

This has also helped the city demographically, hasn't it, stopped the flight out of the city as people get their kids toward college age, and they can go to Virginia or go to Maryland or something like that? Have you seen a demographic limit when you start offering the same higher educational opportunities that States do?

Mayor WILLIAMS. We've had, as you know, some issues with the demographers, as cities always do. But I think if you look at all the other evidence, statistical and anecdotal, and people applying for permits, licenses, renewals, housing demand in the city, you see that, I think, our population has stabilized and it is turning back up in two important ways. One, on the higher end, yes, you're seeing people who are staying in the city because there are those choices. But as I mentioned with Woodson, and this is very important, you're seeing families that are struggling that otherwise would have left the city, and that's even a worse situation, where you're struggling to make it, enter the world of responsibility, the city can't help you, otherwise would have left. And they left over the last 20, 30 years, now they're staying because they know there is promise and potential for their kids.

That figure, I think, to share that with other Members here, that figure at Woodson that I mentioned, 50 percent increase in matriculation is a powerful figure.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. I think as you and Ms. Norton and others go out and spread the word in the city and it gets out, I mean, the way this was envisioned to work, and Mrs. Graham would have said the same thing, kids start going to college because instead of just a dream it becomes something affordable to them. One kid starts, another kid starts, all of a sudden it's the thing to do.

In my local high schools in Fairfax, you walk up to somebody, what are you doing next year, everybody's going to college. I'm going here, I'm applying here, that's just what everybody does. We need to make that this way in the city, too, that this is the thing to do.

And this is how it starts. You take a look at the market increase, and as we're a long way from where we want to be, obviously, Mayor Williams, but this is a start. Maybe an enhancement of the

program, even a modest enhancement, Ms. Norton, could help that as we work our way through some tough budgetary times.

I think the program has been a tremendous success. I think the only boundaries are basically our ability to go out and spread the word to the kids in the city and have the funds available. That's our limitation.

How many more people could take advantage of this, do you think, if funding were unlimited? Does anybody have an idea of how many kids we're missing right now because we have limitations on the funding? Next panel will have that.

Mayor WILLIAMS. My understanding, and it's just been confirmed, is that there's no limitation now, but as we project into the future, over the next 5 years, if we don't make the changes we're talking about, the level of funding——

Chairman TOM DAVIS. We're going to come up against the limits.

Mayor WILLIAMS [continuing]. Then we will see a loss of students.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. I think that's where we're heading, just trying to stay ahead of the curve.

Let me again thank you for your help in this, and I think the program has been a success. I have people stop me all the time who are D.C. students, who are somewhere and thank me for the program. Usually when I run into somebody from D.C., they're not thanking me for something. [Laughter.]

But this is one you feel good about, you've given opportunity to kids that they wouldn't have had otherwise.

Ms. Norton.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I found the Mayor's testimony quite complete. I do have a question or two for him.

I do want to reemphasize what you said about the model that we used in drawing this bill, it was a State model. The chairman uses the term level playing field. It seems to me that our first obligation is to keep it as close to what residents in the States experience. And it's amazing what they experience, because they go to graduate school. Imagine going to law school. If you go to Georgetown, where I still teach, and somebody were to say, you can go, if it were a State school, the low in-State tuition, the difference would be huge.

But keeping to this model, indeed, Mr. Chairman, if you recall, we insisted on this model so scrupulously that when some of your residents came to see you about whether or not in Virginia private schools would qualify under our program, you remember that many State schools give amounts to go to private schools, lesser amounts, nevertheless amounts to go to private schools. And it was at your suggestion that we added private institutions.

That has really been a big boon. Because if you look at the largest number of students who use the TAG Program, the largest number go to Howard University, which means that they stay home, therefore save travel and living expenses, probably, and therefore it has meant something important, whether you go away to school in a region or in the country or whether you stay at home.

As for the District picking up some of the cost, Mr. Mayor, as I understand it now, you are in the process, and I'm working with you, the chairman is working with me, indeed, as I speak, of trying

to get the Federal Government to take over State functions which no city bears. So we don't do the city a favor by putting yet another State function on the city. The city already has UDC, and we say, OK, you take the costs also of students going to State supported institutions.

So I'd like to know what that would do budgetarily if you had to take on this State function. Do you think there's room in your budget to take on part of the cost here, or indeed, don't you already pay, doesn't the city already have its own program to assist in tuition for students who need some assistance?

Mayor WILLIAMS. In the LEAP Program we added $1.5 million——

Ms. NORTON. What is it called?

Mayor WILLIAMS. Leveraging Education Attainment Program, or Achievement Program, a million and a half. But I think the larger issue you address is that, the GAO has found this, coastal cities tend to be higher cost. We have a high concentration of poverty in our city, we have a number of Federal responsibilities, particularly in the infrastructure area, without the resources to meet those responsibilities. So people can look at our budget and say, well, can't you just find money for this in your budget? Yes, we can, but we're robbing Peter to pay Paul.

And you're right, it is particularly onerous when you're talking about a State responsibility and this whole issue is caused by a mismatch of State responsibilities without a State tax base and no State to take care of it.

Ms. NORTON. Indeed, if I may offer an opinion, Mr. Mayor, if you do perhaps have any extra money, I would suggest you put it into the D.C. public schools, so that children can be prepared to go to college somewhere, rather than into higher education. First thing is first.

Mayor WILLIAMS. Well, if I could just answer that as a great example, because I know all the States come up here asking for money for their IDEA, for their special education to help their States take care of these costs. We've got a double whammy. We're a city faced with a State responsibility which has a huge chunk of our public education budget.

Ms. NORTON. So to put it in DEA, or let me ask you, as I remember it, didn't D.C. either have to decimate or cut its capital budget for the public schools last year?

Mayor WILLIAMS. Both years. And we're proud of the fact that we've gotten the District an investment grade rating now. We're hoping that we'll get another improvement this year. But in order to do that, as you all know over the years from monitoring our finances, we have to maintain the right per capita debt load. In other words, it's like the family, we've got to lighten up on the credit cards.

So basically what we've done is we've dumped around $300 million of capital off the capital budget. But we've protected the schools. Well, when people drive in raggedy roads, when they see infrastructure that isn't quite what it should be, that's an example of that. So we're being fiscally responsible, but we are robbing our infrastructure.

Ms. NORTON. Including your school infrastructure.

Mayor WILLIAMS. I think the business community, for example, that works with our schools, they go in there and tell you that you're over $2 billion, somewhere between $2 billion and $3 billion in your school capital needs, for all your schools combined. And we're putting in about $800 million, $900 million, it sounds like a lot of money, but it doesn't really approach what the need is.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much, Mayor Williams, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mayor WILLIAMS. Thank you.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Tony, thank you very much for being here.

Mayor WILLIAMS. Thank you, and thank you, Congresswoman Norton.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. We have a second panel, we'll call you up now. We'll take a 2-minute recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman TOM DAVIS. We'll swear everybody in.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you. Our next panel is a very distinguished panel. We have Kelly Valentine, the acting director of the District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Grants Program; Argelia Rodriguez, the executive director of the District of Columbia College Access Program; Brian Ford, a former DC TAG recipient, and Anthony Talley, the director of guidance and counseling at the Washington Math Science and Technology Public Charter High School.

Right in front of you are some lights. The green light means go, it means you have up to 4 minutes, then it will turn yellow, that means you have 1 minute left, and try to sum up in 5 minutes. Your total testimony is in the record, so it's part of the official record when we put up the hearings. Questions will be based on that.

So try to keep it to 5 minutes and then we'll go to questions. Let me just thank each of you for being here today. We're really happy to have you and hear about this as we move to reauthorize this.

Ms. Valentine, we'll start with you and then move straight on down. Welcome.

STATEMENTS OF KELLY VALENTINE, ACTING DIRECTOR, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA TUITION ASSISTANCE GRANTS PROGRAM; ARGELIA RODRIGUEZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM; BRIAN L. FORD, FORMER DC TAG RECIPIENT; AND ANTHONY TALLEY, DIRECTOR OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING, WASHINGTON MATH SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY PUBLIC CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

Ms. VALENTINE. Good morning, Chairman Davis, Congresswoman Norton and other members of the committee. My name is Kelly Valentine and I am the interim director of the District's Tuition Assistance Grants Program [DC TAG]. I am proud to be here today to provide testimony on the success of the DC TAG Program and the unprecedented value that it has added to numerous families across the District of Columbia.

Your support and efforts to make this program a reality is, without doubt, one of the cornerstones to ensuring that the Williams

administration realizes its goal to strengthen children, youth, family and elders. In particular, in the 12 days that I have been working in the DC TAG office, I am impressed by this program's ability to disburse more than $63 million to 6,527 students and am excited by the possibility of doubling the impact of this service to the community as we embark on the next phase of programming.

While you consider reauthorizing the program, I implore you also to add to your thinking a few facts that speak to DC TAG's overwhelming success. While the first cohort of students who took advantage of the grant are preparing for graduation, we anticipate we will all soon realize benefits that the program has had for students, entire families and their communities.

To put this reality into perspective, let me begin by providing you with some hard numbers. To date, close to $25 million has been disbursed to public institutions across 46 States and the District of Columbia. Over $23 million has been disbursed to public and private HBCUs. Nearly $3 million has been disbursed to colleges and universities in the Washington Metropolitan area.

It should be noted that Virginia, Maryland and D.C. round off the top five States receiving DC TAG grants. These figures speak directly to our students' desires to broaden their horizon as well as the institutions' willingness to support the District's efforts to provide residents with a vast array of first class options for higher education.

Moreover, the students that have benefited from DC TAG reside in every ward in the city. Ward 4 continues to lead the way at 19 percent of students using the program, followed closely by wards 5, 7, 8 and 3, at 17 percent, 16 percent, 11 percent and 10 percent, respectively. Initial surveys of graduating high school seniors from DCPS and charter schools indicate that for 75 percent of these students, DC TAG has made the difference in their decision to continue their education beyond high school. Sixty-five percent of the survey students indicated that the existence of the DC TAG Program has enabled them to exercise their right to choose the college that they feel will best suit their needs. Fifty-five percent of the students surveyed will be the first in their families to pursue higher education.

It is clear from these results, amongst others, that the DC TAG Program is meeting and exceeding initial expectations framed in the unparalleled legislation signed into law on November 12, 1999. To encourage even greater participation in the program, DC TAG has made a number of notable adjustments in its program implementation. To name a few significant changes, DC TAG has redesigned its application to be more user friendly and we are working diligently to bring the application process on line by June of this year.

Also, we look forward to working more closely with DC CAP to strengthen retention efforts already underway under their leadership. In addition, we are working with the business offices of participating institutions to develop seamless integrated disbursement processes. These and other operational improvements, coupled with strategic marketing and outreach efforts, will make certain that DC TAG continues to be successful.

Most importantly, as Mayor Williams has indicated, to ensure the program's continued success, DC TAG needs an annual appropriation of at least $25.6 million which will surely enable us to realize the program's anticipated outcomes. As the Mayor once said, DC TAG has made the dream of attending college a reality for thousands of District residents. In a few minutes, you will hear first hand testimony on how DC TAG has made obtaining a first class education a possibility for District students.

In conclusion, I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on the District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Grant Program and look forward to answering any additional questions that you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Valentine follows:]

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To encourage even greater participation in the program, DC TAG has made a number of notable adjustments in its program implementation. To name a few significant changes, DC TAG has redesigned its application to be more user friendly and we are working diligently to bring it online by June. Also, we look forward to working with DC CAP to strengthen retention efforts already underway under their leadership. In addition, we are working with the business offices of participating institutions to develop seamless integrated disbursement processes. These and other operational improvements coupled with strategic marketing and outreach efforts will make certain that DC TAG continues to be successful.

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million dollars. This will surely enable us to realize the program's anticipated outcomes.

As the Mayor once said, DC TAG has made the dream of attending college a reality for thousands of District residents. And, in a few minutes you will hear first hand testimony on how DC TAG has made attaining a first class education a possibility for District students.

In conclusion, I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on the District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Grant Program and look forward to answering any additional questions that you may have.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you very much.

Ms. Rodriguez, thanks for being with us.

Ms. RODRIGUEZ. Good morning. My name is Argelia Rodriguez, and I am the executive director of the District of Columbia College Access Program [DC CAP]. I am delighted to have been asked by the committee to speak to you today about the importance of the reauthorization of the D.C. College Access Act.

Let me begin by thanking the Members of Congress who have championed this program from the beginning and who secured passage of what may be the single most important and successful education initiative in the history of the District of Columbia.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge you, Chairman Davis, and you, Delegate Norton, for your extraordinary efforts to transform a good idea into an act of Congress. The D.C. College Access Act was born here in the House of Representatives and we're grateful for the leadership of Congressman Istook, Knollenberg, Frelinghuysen and Fattah of the House Appropriations Committee for ensuring that the act was fully funded from the start. And in fact, the D.C. College Access Act has enjoyed not only bipartisan support, but unanimous support in the first 5 years in both the House and the Senate, where Senators Voinovich, DeWine, Durban and Landrieu have been particularly helpful in securing passage and the funding of this landmark program.

D.C. College Access was seen from the start as a partnership between Government and the private sector. The Government agreed to pay the difference between in State and out of State tuition for D.C. students attending college beyond the borders of the District of Columbia, and the business and the philanthropic communities in this area agreed to provide the resources necessary to launch an unprecedented college counseling admissions program for D.C. public high school students.

The D.C. College Access Program [DC CAP], represents the fulfillment of this agreement and the private sector's substantial and long term commitment to increasing D.C. college student access. DC CAP has recruited, trained and put to work full time school based DC CAP advisors in all 18 D.C. public high schools. We provide direct college counseling services to more than 12,000 public high school students and their families starting in ninth grade. We start by telling these students that college is not an impossible dream, and that thanks to you and this remarkable legislation, they can go to college if they get the right preparation in high school.

As the high school years unfold, we make sure that these students are taking the courses they need to gain admission to college. We assist them with their college applications, we help them secure financial aid and scholarships from public and private sources. If there is still a need left over, DC CAP will provide them with up to $2,000 a year in last dollar award scholarships assistance to make sure they can pay all the expenses associated with college.

Once they're in college, DC CAP retention advisors continue to work with these students and their families, providing on-campus student support services, academic and financial aid counseling for up to 5 years of college to help ensure that students are able to complete their education. DC CAP is currently tracking, counseling

and/or providing financial assistance to almost 3,400 students at over 400 colleges around the country and has awarded almost $5 million in scholarships to low income students.

This partnership has succeeded beyond our wildest expectations. DC CAP as a non-profit organization has raised some $35 million in private funds over the past 5 years. Much has come through significant grants from Lockheed Martin, Exxon Mobil, Fannie Mae, Marriott International, Verizon, the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Sallie Mae, the Riggs National Corp., the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, the Kimsey Foundation, Carnegie Corp., Comcast, Bank of America, Dell, Wachovia, U.S. Airways, I could go on and on, and at least 100 other companies and philanthropic organizations.

We've also raised money through special fundraising events such as Fight for Children's School Night, the Sallie Mae 10K Run and the Tony Kornheiser and Mike Wilbon Celebrity Golf Classic and Roast. We've received large anonymous gifts and small donations from private citizens. The community is fully invested in DC CAP and their investment, along with yours, is paying large dividends already. This remarkable partnership between Congress and the Washington Community has in 5 short years become a national model for what the public and private sectors can do when they harness their distinct resources to a common purpose.

The D.C. College Access Act is an unequivocal, unqualified success. While historical numbers are difficult to verify, we believe that the number of D.C. public high school graduates going on to college has doubled in the last 5 years, rising dramatically from 30 percent to 60 percent of students. Our belief is based on the unprecedented increases in D.C. student enrollment in colleges and universities around the country, as reported by the individual institutions themselves.

As an example, from the fall of 1999 to the fall of 2002, D.C. student freshmen enrollment has increased 312 percent at Virginia State University, 900 percent at St. Mary's College of Maryland, 200 percent at North Carolina A&T, 185 percent at Ohio State, 243 percent at Penn State, 206 percent at Norfolk University, and 100 percent at the University of Vermont. I could go on and on, case after case, State after State, citing examples of colleges and universities all around the country that are reporting that their student enrollment has doubled, tripled and even quadrupled in less than 4 years.

And let me reiterate that these statistics are not numbers that have been gleaned, extrapolated, interpreted or massaged in any manner. These statistics have been provided by the individual enrollment offices. And what does this mean? We know what this means is that the whole new population of students of the District of Columbia have been given the opportunity to go to college and they are taking it. The impact of the D.C. College Access Act simply cannot be overstated. The legislation has helped literally thousands of students who otherwise would never have the opportunity

to go.

In conclusion, I urge you to reauthorize the act, because in fact it's the act of Congress that has earned the right to be renewed. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Rodriguez follows:]

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE DC COLLEGE ACCESS ACT OF 1999

CONGRESSIONAL HEARING TESTIMONY, March 25, 2004
Argelia Rodriguez, Executive Director for the DC College Access Program

Good Morning. My name is Argelia Rodriguez and I am the Executive Director of the District of Columbia College Access Program, or as it is more commonly known, DC-CAP. I am delighted to have been asked by the Committee on Government Reform to speak to you today about the importance of the reauthorization of the DC College Access Act.

Let me begin by thanking the members of Congress who have championed this program from the beginning and who secured passage of what may be the single most important and successful education initiative in the history of the District of Columbia.

In particular, I'd like to acknowledge you, Chairman Davis, and you, Delegate Norton, for your extraordinary efforts to transform a good idea into an Act of Congress. The DC College Access Act was born here in the House of Representatives, and we're grateful for the leadership of Congressmen Istook, Knollenberg, Frelinghuysen and Fattah of the House Appropriations Committee for ensuring that the Act was fully funded from the start.

Indeed, the DC College Access Act has enjoyed not only bipartisan support but unanimous support in these first five years, in both the House and the Senate, where Senators Voinovich, DeWine, Durbin and Landrieu have been particularly helpful in securing passage and funding of this landmark program.

DC College Access was seen from the start as a partnership between government and the private sector. The government agreed to pay the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition for DC students attending college beyond the borders of the District of Columbia, and the business and philanthropic communities in this area agreed to provide the resources needed to launch and operate an unprecedented counseling, college admission and retention program for the students of DC public high schools. **The DC College Access Program** represents the fulfillment of this agreement and the private sector's substantial and long term commitment to increasing DC student college access.

DC-CAP has recruited, trained and put to work full-time, school-based DC-CAP advisors in all 18 DC public high schools. We provide direct college counseling services to more than 12,000 public high school students and their families, starting in 9th grade. We start by telling these students that college is not an impossible dream, and that thanks to you and this remarkable legislation-- they can go to college if they get the right preparation in high school.

As the high school years unfold, we make sure these students are taking the courses they need to gain admission to college. We assist them with their college applications. We help secure financial aid and scholarships from public and private sources. And if there is still a financial need, DC-CAP will provide them with up to $2,000 a year in last-dollar scholarship assistance to make sure they can pay all the expenses associated with a college education.

Once they're in college, DC-CAP College Retention Advisors continue to work with these students and their families, providing on-campus student support services, academic and financial aid counseling, for up to five years of college, to help ensure that students are able to complete their education.

DC-CAP is currently tracking, counseling and/or providing financial assistance to almost 3400 students, at over 400 colleges around the country, and has awarded almost $5 million dollars in scholarships for low income students.

This partnership has succeeded beyond our wildest expectations. DC-CAP, as a nonprofit organization has raised some $35 million in private funds over the past five years. Much has come through significant grants from Lockheed Martin, Exxon Mobil, Fannie Mae Foundation, Marriott International, AES, Verizon, the Robert and Arlene Kogod Foundation, the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Sallie Mae, the Catherine Reynolds Foundation, the Riggs National Corporation, the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, the Kimsey Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, Comcast, Bank of America, Wachovia, Dell, US Airways, NASDAQ, the Advisory Board, ObjectVideo, the Foster Family Fund and nearly 100 other companies and philanthropies.

We've also raised money through special fundraising events such as Fight for Children's School Night, the Sallie Mae 10K Run, and the Tony Kornheiser-Michael Wilbon Celebrity Golf Classic and Roast. We've received large anonymous gifts and small donations from private citizens. This community is fully invested in DC-CAP, and their investment – along with yours – is paying large dividends already.

This remarkable partnership between Congress and the Washington community has in five short years become a model for the nation of what the public and private sectors can do when they harness their distinct resources to a common purpose.

The DC College Access Act is an unequivocal, unqualified success. While historical numbers are difficult to verify, we believe that the number of DC high school graduates going on to college has doubled in the last five years, rising dramatically from 30 percent of students to 60 percent of students. Our belief is based on the unprecedented increases in DC student enrollment in colleges and universities around the country, as reported by the individual institutions themselves. As an example, from the fall of 1999 to the fall of 2002, DC student freshman enrollment increased:

- 312 percent at Virginia State University;
- 900 percent at St. Mary's College of Maryland;
- 200 percent at North Carolina A&T;
- 185 percent at Ohio State;
- 243 percent at Penn State;
- 206 percent at Norfolk University;
- 100 percent at the University of Vermont

I could go on and on, case after case, state after state, citing examples of colleges and universities in DC, MD, VA and all around the country, that are reporting that their DC student enrollment has doubled, tripled, and even quadrupled in less than four years. And let me reiterate that these statistics are not numbers that have been gleaned, or extrapolated, interpreted or massaged in any manner. These statistics have been provided by the individual institutions' enrollment offices.

And what does this mean when we know that the national freshmen student enrollment only grew by an estimated 5% over the same period? What does it mean when there is this dramatic a rise in the college enrollment of students who come from a city whose population has been declining and now stagnant for the past five years?

It means that a whole new population of students in the District have been given the opportunity to go to college and they are taking it…The impact of the DC College Access Act simply cannot be overstated especially when you consider that 80% percent of the children you're sending to college are the first in their families to ever have that opportunity. Most of them come from poor, single-parent homes. Most have lived on public assistance all their lives. More than nine in ten are minority students. Many had never ventured across the Potomac River until you gave them a chance to attend college and a choice of colleges to attend.

This legislation has given access to literally thousands of students who would otherwise never have had the opportunity to go to college. By giving these underrepresented, disadvantaged, low-income students the "equal" opportunity to attend college, in one single generation you could reverse decades of family despair, poverty and welfare dependency.

And for DC-CAP, the best part of this news is that 75% of the students that we are assisting are staying in school year after year, and the first full complement of DC-CAP students will graduate from college this spring.

What you've done with the passage of the DC College Access Act is nothing less than to transform thousands of young lives. You've helped them break the cycle of poverty and despair in which their families were imprisoned for generations.

In conclusion, I urge you – I implore you -- to reauthorize the DC College Access Act. It is a government program that absolutely works. It has brought out the best in the Washington business and philanthropic community. It has brought fairness and choice to DC students, who are used to having neither. And it has created life-changing opportunities for thousands of young people who are taking advantage of it in record numbers. It is legislation you should be proud of, and it's an Act of Congress that has earned the right to be renewed.

Thank You.

# # #

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Ford, welcome. Thank you for being here.

Mr. FORD. Good morning, Chairman Davis and members of this distinguished committee. Thank you for allowing me to come and speak to you. My name is Brian L. Ford, and I'm a former recipient of the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant Program.

Born and raised in Washington, DC, I have experienced first hand the constant struggle to survive the dangerous streets while my family struggled to stay above the poverty line. Being able to afford college seemed far-fetched growing up in Southeast D.C. However, I am a goal oriented person and I did not let these things deter me from achieving my goal. I knew by the grace of God and support of my family, friends and others that I would find a way to pay for school.

In 1998, I graduated from Eastern Senior High School here in the District and I decided to attend the University of Delaware, where I majored in political science. At Delaware, I received financial aid to assist me in paying for school. However, it was not enough. The first 2 years, my parents had to contribute almost $3,000 to help me pay for school, which was a lot for my parents at the time. I had two sisters and a nephew for whom my parents were still providing.

In 2000, my junior year in college, I applied for and was awarded a D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant. For the first time since I started college, my parents did not have to pay anything out of their pocket for me to attend school. With the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant, along with other financial aid, I was able to have my tuition paid in full. I was able to focus fully on obtaining my college degree and not worry if my tuition would be paid. My grades improved to the point where I made the Deans List twice and earned a 3.0 by graduation.

I graduated in May 2002 from the University of Delaware with a Bachelors of Art degree in Political Science. That day was a very special day for my family and me. My family was proud to witness one of their own graduating from college. I was proud of myself for accomplishing my goals and thank everyone who made that day possible.

Currently, I am a financial aid counselor at Trinity College here in D.C., where I advise students about financial aid and encourage D.C. students to apply for grants like D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant. We serve a significant population of D.C. residents who demonstrate a very high level of financial need. Some of these students are struggling to stay in school, and the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant assists students to continue in school while in some cases borrowing less in student loans. Many D.C. residents at Trinity College are not currently able to benefit from this program, and I hope that some issues can be addressed in the reauthorization process to allow all D.C. residents to be eligible.

In conclusion, I want to give a special thanks to Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton and this committee for developing this program. I hope that you will agree with me that the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant Program is a necessity for the city of Washington, DC, and its residents. I urge you to please continue to provide financial support to the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant Program so

1 day students like myself can have a college degree hanging on their wall for the world to see.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ford follows:]

Brian L. Ford

Congressional Hearing on DC Tuition Assistance Grant program

Good morning Chairman Davis and members of this distinguished committee. Thank you for allowing me to come and speak to you. My name is Brian L. Ford and I am a former recipient of the DC Tuition Assistance Grant program.

Born and raised in Washington, DC, I have experienced firsthand the constant struggle to survive the dangerous streets while my family struggled to stay above the poverty line. Being able to afford college seemed far-fetched growing up in Southeast DC. However, I am a goal-oriented person, and I did not let these things deter me from achieving my goal. I knew by the grace of God and support of family, friends, and others that I would find a way to pay for school.

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able to focus fully on obtaining a college degree and not worry if my bill would be paid. My grades improved to the point where I made the Dean's List twice and earned a 3.0 GPA by graduation.

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Currently, I am a Financial Aid Counselor at Trinity College in Washington, DC where I advise students about financial aid and encourage DC students to apply for grants like DC Tuition Assistance Grant. We serve a significant population of DC residents who demonstrate a very high level of financial need. Some of these students are struggling to stay in school, and the DC Tuition Assistance Grant assists students to continue in school while in some cases borrowing less in student loans. Many DC residents at Trinity College are not currently able to benefit from this program, and I hope that some issues can be addressed in the reauthorization process to allow all DC residents to be eligible.

In conclusion, I want to give a special thanks to Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton and this committee for developing this program. I hope that you will agree with me that the DC Tuition Assistance Grant program is a necessity for the city of Washington, DC and for its residents. I urge you to please continue to provide financial support to the DC Tuition Assistance Grant program so one day students like myself can have a college diploma hanging on the wall for the world to see.

Thank you.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you very much, Brian.

Mr. Talley.

Mr. TALLEY. Good morning. My name is Anthony Talley, and I'm the director of guidance and counseling at Washington Mathematics Science Technology Public Charter High School.

The District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999, Public Law 106–98, as amended, established a tuition assistance program providing D.C. high school graduates with tuition assistance to take advantage of higher education resources in the surrounding region and throughout the country. This legislation authorized funding for the program for 5 years. I, as a guidance counselor, want to personally thank Chairman Davis and Ms. Norton for your outstanding work.

This program has a direct impact on D.C. high school students. Many students are the first in their families to attend college, Rutgers University, Frostburg State, Temple University, Penn State University, Hampton University, Johnson C. Smith University, North Carolina Central University, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, North Carolina A&T State University, Fayetteville State University, University of Alabama, Ball State University, Edward Waters College, Kentucky State University, University of Cincinnati, Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and Missouri, Columbia University, University of Delaware, Vorhees College, Virginia State University, Norfolk State University, Winston Salem State University, University of Maryland at College Park, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, American University, Georgetown University, Howard University, and George Washington. The list goes on and on.

I am an advocate for all students and parents, particularly from Washington Mathematics Science Technology Public Charter High School, H.D. Woodson Senior High School and the Washington Tennis and Education Foundation, Center for Excellence. Many of our students have been accepted to Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Dartmouth, Tufts and Stanford. However, this funding does not apply. This is a limitation based on current law.

Chairman Davis, your committee must review future costs of attending State grant institutions, historically Black colleges and universities and local colleges and universities within the D.C. metropolitan area. All future students have the right to share this process. And I want to thank you.

In closing, students seated in this chamber have already been accepted to colleges throughout the country. Most have received their official award notification of eligibility for the District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Grant, the TAG, for 2004–2005 school year. Would those students who have received the notification and are waiting for notification please stand?

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you all for being with us. This adds a lot.

[Applause.]

Mr. TALLEY. In addition, a student who received his award from last year is also present. If he would please stand, he is now attending the University of Alabama at Birmingham, an H.D. Wood-

son graduate.

[Applause.]

Mr. TALLEY. Let me also add this. I urge full funding and reauthorization of the TAG Program. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Talley follows:]

The District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-98), as amended, established a tuition assistance program, providing DC high school graduates with tuition assistance to take advantage of higher education resources in the surrounding region and throughout the country. This legislation authorized funding for the program for five years, from Fiscal Year 2000 through Fiscal Year 2005.

This program has a direct impact on DC high school graduates. Many students are first in their families to attend college: **Rutgers University, Frostburg State, Temple University, Penn State University, Hampton University, Johnson C. Smith University, North Carolina Central University, University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill), North Carolina A & T State University, Fayetteville State University, University of Alabama, Ball State University, Edward Waters College, Kentucky State University, University of Cincinnati, Lincoln University (PA and MO), Columbia University, University of Delaware, Voorhees College, Virginia State University, Norfolk State University, Winston-Salem State University, University of Maryland College Park, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, American University, Georgetown University, Howard University, and George Washington. The list goes on and on.**

I am an advocate for all students and parents, particularly from Washington Mathematics Science Technology Public Charter High School, H. D. Woodson Senior High School, and Washington Tennis & Education Foundation, Center For Excellence.

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In closing, students seated in this Chamber have already been accepted to colleges throughout the country; most have received their official award notification of eligibility for a District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Grant (DCTAG) for the 2004-2005 school year. In addition, a student who received his award from last year is also present; he's attending University of Alabama at Birmingham.

LET ME ALSO ADD THIS:

Thank you.

Testimony Given: Thursday, March 25, 2004 10:00 am
Anthony Talley, Director of Guidance & Counseling
Washington Mathematics Science Technology Public Charter High School
Washington, DC
Washington Tennis & Education Foundation
Center For Excellence, College Counselor

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Thank you very much. Thank all of you.

I've got votes on the floor, I'm going to have to go. Unfortunately, Ms. Norton doesn't get to go over. We're working on that, aren't we, Ms. Norton? It ought to happen.

But I'm going to let her finish, chair the meeting and conclude it. But I have a couple of questions first.

First of all, thank all of you for what you're doing, and to the students, you're the reason we do this. You're the future. We just want to give you the tools, and the rest is up to you. But thank you very much for being here. It means a lot to me and I know to Ms. Norton as well. It is our intent to move to reauthorization in this committee and move it to the House floor as quickly as possible and get it over to the Senate. We think this is an important bill and with all the other things that Congress has on its plate, sometimes legislation like this can slip through the cracks if we kind of wait until the last minute. But your being here, your testimony really adds to the record.

I have a couple of questions. What percent of the students that are participating are from private schools, and what are from public schools in the city, public, private, charter, do you have any breakout of that?

Ms. VALENTINE. I believe 80 percent are from public schools.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Very good. Very good. I mean, it applies to everybody, that's not it, but I just was curious to know that.

I would be interested, you don't have to get this information now, the number of graduates that we have each year in the school system. I know that you have people dropping out, and this has nothing to do with the dropout rates. Dropout rates are going to happen. These are kids that graduate and there are opportunities when they graduate. The kids that don't graduate, we're looking at other strategies to help them get there.

But that has nothing to do with this program. This program is for a kid who graduates, there's a future for you if you want to go to higher education. And we'd like to know how many graduates in the D.C. public school system are having each year, and a percent of those going to college versus the percent that were there before. That would be an important thing, just looking at the public school system, for the committee to know and have in the record. You may not have that at your fingertips, but we just would want to have it. I think it will be a statistic that helps this along.

I don't see any legislative problems in moving ahead with this if we move now. We're in a tough budget year, but every year is a tough budget year up here. But this is a program that is successful, and when I see the young men and women here that have benefited, and people like Brian Ford and the young man over here from the University of Alabama, Birmingham, we want to try to bring stability to the program and predictability, so people know what's going on in the future and continue to get the word out.

I would just say thank you to all of you for being here. Brian, what would you have done if you hadn't gone to college? What would have happened if you hadn't gone to college?

Mr. FORD. I never really thought about that. I always knew that I wanted to go to college, sir.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Good work. That's what I want to hear. What we're trying to do is change the mentality of kids as they move up that college is something that they ought to do, that it's an in thing to do.

Mr. FORD. Oh, yes. My generation has benefited from our past generation, this is the first generation I believe that will get the opportunity to go to college because of what our parents have done for us to get this opportunity. So I see that my peers are realizing that college is the thing, with assistance, with financial aid and other grants and scholarships out there, students realize that they can go to college now.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. But a lot of kids at Eastern didn't go to college, right, that graduated?

Mr. FORD. In my class, I am thinking maybe around 30 percent. I could be wrong.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Hopefully that will come up. At my local high schools, it's 90 percent plus go to college or some kind of higher education. There's no reason over the next generation we can't change that in the District. It takes a lot of work, but you kids are kind of pioneers and pathfinders.

I have to go, I'm going to give the gavel to Ms. Norton. Thank you all for being here. It's an important program to us and we want to move it as quickly as we can.

Ms. Norton, over to you.

Ms. NORTON [assuming Chair]. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, it says something about the trust between the Chairman and me that he gives me this gavel, fully expecting that I will give it back. [Laughter.]

I have appreciated this testimony, and the way you've educated this committee. We now have, if this is the year of authorization, does that mean we have a cohort of four people who have received this benefit for 4 years?

Ms. VALENTINE. Yes.

Ms. NORTON. If so, I need to know how many such people, are we to the point where we now have the first graduating class?

Ms. VALENTINE. In May we will have the first graduating class. We will have one group coming in the fall.

Ms. NORTON. How many were there in the first year and how many are there in the graduating year?

Ms. VALENTINE. It's about a 30 percent retention rate, so it's about 620 students of the 1,900 that started that we anticipated graduating, we're not sure yet. But they're scheduled to be in their fourth year.

Ms. NORTON. So 30 percent of those who started in the first year are graduating in the fourth year?

Ms. VALENTINE. Correct.

Ms. NORTON. Now, we have to take into account what higher education is all about today. One of the things I'd like you to do is compare those figures, you may not have those figures today, with the number of students who graduated 4 years. In my generation that was more often done, of course far fewer people went to college, and many were self-financed, and then of course schools gave scholarships often for the full amount. You didn't have the loans and so forth.

So it's a very different kind of world today. In fact, that's why the growth today is in adult education, 2 year colleges, people going back to colleges. So I don't want, in my generation we would have said wow, about 30 percent. But it will be important to see what that means by comparison.

And I suppose it will be important also to see what it means for the District in the sense that Members and the public keep reading about poor scores on these D.C. tests that children take every year, and yet you have this rising number going to college. Ms. Valentine, can you reconcile this notion that somehow all these students are doing so poorly in tests, but where's the chairman's list of schools? The chairman and I were looking at this list of schools. I recognize that many of these students come from homes where somebody has gone to college.

But goodness sake, when you see the variety of colleges here, that many of them are HBCUs, many of them are colleges in the region, you know for sure, even from your own testimony, that many are from families where they're the first to go to school. I can't reconcile all this notion about the D.C. public schools aren't training anybody with the figures—here it is. It's really something to see, this long list of schools here, where people are going.

How is it that students who we're told don't do very well on these standardized tests are able to go in such large numbers and in such growing numbers to these schools that you're running out of money now to send them to these schools?

Ms. VALENTINE. I think the one thing we need to reconcile is the number of graduates in total with the number of graduates that are going to school, and we're working on that number. So I'm not sure that I can answer your question now, but I'd be happy to get back to you.

Ms. NORTON. Say that again?

Ms. VALENTINE. I'm not sure that we know the complete number, the accurate number of students that are graduating, and then the percentage that are actually graduating after 4 years——

Ms. NORTON. No, I'm asking quite a different question. My question, and Ms. Rodriguez also wants to speak to it, my question is this. You have to qualify to get into a school. Many students drop out of school for financial—I don't associate anything with dropping out of school, because the majority of Americans do not now just finish in 4 years. And State schools are notorious for people dropping out and coming back.

But you have to qualify to get in the school. So I'm trying to reconcile the notion that these students' test scores, which of course when they keep reading this, discourages them, I want them to know that some things that you're hearing cannot be entirely correct if in fact you have this large number of students going to colleges of every variety. Ms. Rodriguez and then Mr. Talley wanted to speak to that.

Ms. VALENTINE. DC CAP has been instrumental in readying the students in the public schools for college exams and preparatory exams. I think that's what their role has been as our partner.

Chairman TOM DAVIS. Ms. Rodriguez.

Ms. RODRIGUEZ. Thank you, Kelly.

A lot of it is that the students, when students get the support that they need, the emotional, the academic in terms of tutorial, remediation, and they get long term support, which from our organization is priority, they are able to succeed in almost any environment. We have institutions that are willing to work with us who allow us to introduce students into the system where they pay special attention to them and they provide them with special services as well. And the schools are committed to diversity. So they will work with us to make sure that the kids we bring in succeed.

I would just like to add that we also have our first complement of seniors graduating this year. Of the kids we are counseling, it was our small pilot class, 80 percent of them are still in school. And we are very, very excited about this. We're committed to them for 5 years, but we believe that with sustained intervention that these students from the District of Columbia can succeed at colleges.

Before I go to Mr. Talley, does DC CAP help students get what virtually every middle class kid in America gets, which is the tutoring that comes with the SATs?

Ms. RODRIGUEZ. We do not provide the tutoring itself. But what we do is steer the children and motivate them to go to the services that are already provided within the school system.

Ms. NORTON. Are there services that pay, it's almost impossible to believe that there's a middle class kid in D.C. who doesn't pay tuition to go to get tutored as to how to pass the SAT. Are there organizations in D.C. that will pay for any child who wants to get such tutoring?

Ms. RODRIGUEZ. There are organizations that work with the school system. I know that the school system 2 years ago started offering Saturday free classes for students for preparation for SATs and ACTs. So the students were taking increasing advantage of that situation. But it is free to the students. So I know that Princeton Review has worked with the school system, I know that Kaplan worked with the school system. It's available within the public school system, free SAT preparation.

Ms. NORTON. And you know, I would like you to submit to this committee precisely what that assistance is, because if it's Saturday classes, that's not like what my son and every kid at his school had.

Ms. RODRIGUEZ. Absolutely.

Ms. NORTON. And I have to tell you, there's no way to level—this is not you, this is not anything that this program was meant to provide, but I live in the real world, and I know there's no way to level the playing field with kids going to college today if you have not had access to one of these tutoring programs to take the SAT. They teach to the test, that's exactly what they do, and you've got a leg up over a kid who hasn't had access to that. I'd be very interested in working with the program and with CAP on that basis.

Mr. Talley.

Mr. TALLEY. One of my comments, listening to you earlier, was when you're looking at the data for testing, which is the Stanford 9 for D.C. public schools, versus the data from the SAT, two entirely different sets of scores. One would ask, how can someone be below basic on the Stanford 9 and come up with 500 or 600 in one

subject matter on the SAT? Well, in part, one is a norm based exam and the other one is a criterion based exam. So the criterion based exams are more toward the SATs and the ACTs.

Now, how do we kind of bridge that gap? What many of the schools are doing, and I was at Woodson for many years, and you were there on several occasions with us, and so was Chairman Davis when the bill was signed. One of the things that we put in the high schools is the SAT math and SAT verbal. At Washington Math Science, commonly called WMST, all 10th graders are required to take the math SAT program and the verbal SAT program.

Ms. NORTON. Do you mean take it as part of the curriculum?

Mr. TALLEY. As a part of the curriculum. Consequently, that has increased our scores. I'm sure you read last year that we were in the top 4 percent of all high schools in the country. There were only four schools in D.C. that made that list.

Ms. NORTON. And you sure did, and congratulations. We are all very proud of this charter school.

Mr. TALLEY. We were ranked 369 out of over 10,000 high schools in the country in the Newsweek article last year.

Ms. NORTON. And three of our public schools as well.

Mr. TALLEY. Absolutely. Banneker was there, and School Without Walls and Wilson. Absolutely.

So my view is that the kids that we work with are the same kids across the river, the same kids that have these social issues. However, it's what we do with those kids. As I mentioned earlier in my testimony, and even when I was at Woodson for the business and finance program, that we still had outstanding students. You remember last year India Austin, she's at Stanford. Now, as a part of my testimony for the reauthorization, Stanford doesn't qualify for the TAG money. However, what we try to look for is additional funding. They gave her $40,000 to come out there. So she's doing quite well.

And I will say, our partnership with the DC CAP, while I was at Woodson, was an asset to the school. It still is. And working with them provided additional services. And with the scores, and I think that one of the things with DC CAP was the encouragement for those extra programs. And as a result, it pays off.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much. Speaking of DC CAP, and we're talking here about the revenue stream for the TAG Program, I'm very impressed with what CAP has been able to do. I do think you are completely indispensable to what we are doing here in D.C., just to throw some money out there and say, you all go to college, is not going to work for many of our students, at least.

I'm wondering if you will experience anything like the kind of shortfall TAG is experiencing, if you have some basic revenue stream. And may I correct people, the credit was given to Katherine Graham for this program. And Katherine Graham was deeply involved in our public schools. Nobody could have been more deeply involved. But let me say for the record that Don Graham is the godfather of the CAP Program, and in a real sense of this TAG Program as well. It is Don Graham, this notion had been out there for a long time that what we should do would be to somehow allow students to have access to State colleges and I can't say enough

about what he's done. I know that he has helped raise money, along with many other businesses in this area.

But I have to ask you, have you experienced any problems because of the poor economy? How will we assure that DC CAP continues as we are trying to assure that DC TAG continues?

Ms. RODRIGUEZ. It is a challenge, fundraising is a challenge. But to the credit of the Washington business community and the philanthropic foundations, they have embraced this program in a way that I don't think any other program in the city has been embraced. And a great deal of that is due to the fact that they knew they were in partnership with Congress. And that in itself provides potential donors with the reassurance of the longevity of the program.

We, as I stated in my testimony, we've raised now $35 million. We don't intend to stop. Because in fact, we have an increasing number of kids going to college. The cost of tuition is escalating such. But I strongly, strongly believe that the Washington community, the business community, the philanthropic community is completely, 100 percent behind this program and completely, completely committed to the partnership with the Congress.

So we will continue.

Ms. NORTON. And it is the regional business community.

Ms. RODRIGUEZ. Yes, it's regional.

Ms. NORTON. Many of these extraordinarily generous corporations and business leaders live in Virginia and Maryland. I know I speak for the chairman when I say that if you need correspondence from us about the importance of CAP to what we are doing here in the Congress, I hope you will not hesitate to call on us.

Ms. RODRIGUEZ. We appreciate that. Thank you very much. Mr. Talley, you wanted to say something?

Mr. TALLEY. Yes. I was just given a note that we also have two additional students here and I would ask them to stand. They're two sisters, one is a junior and I believe the other one is a senior from Tennessee State University.

Ms. NORTON. Stand right on up here so we can see you.

[Applause.]

Ms. NORTON. We take pride in you and what it means for this program.

I'd like to ask Mr. Ford, are you the first in your family to go to college?

Mr. FORD. I'm one of the first. I have two older sisters who graduated from North Carolina Central. They didn't live with my parents. I am one of the first in my household to graduate from college.

Ms. NORTON. You seem to be a before and after student. When you first went to Delaware State——

Mr. FORD. University of Delaware, I'm sorry.

Ms. NORTON. University of Delaware is where you went?

Mr. FORD. Yes.

Ms. NORTON. When you first went, the program wasn't in existence, but while you were there, you were able to take advantage? Is that what your testimony said?

Mr. FORD. I attended University of Delaware in 1998, the program didn't come into existence until 2000. So it was my junior year when I applied for the program.

Ms. NORTON. I meet so many people who have said, oh, goodness, I wish it had been there, I just missed it. Could you tell me what the difference is between what you paid in tuition in 1998 and what you paid in the year after?

Mr. FORD. Well, as I stated in my testimony, my parents contributed the first 2 years almost $3,000.

Ms. NORTON. But what was the tuition?

Mr. FORD. What was the tuition?

Ms. NORTON. Yes. What was the difference in the tuition when you had to pay full out of State tuition, if you recall, and what was the tuition when you had to pay only low in-State tuition?

Mr. FORD. Tuition I think when I first got there was probably around, for out of State students it was $15,000 for the whole year.

Ms. NORTON. What's the in State?

Mr. FORD. In State would probably be around $6,000.

Ms. NORTON. That gives you an idea of what the difference is.

Mr. Davis, if he were here, would correct me if I'm wrong, but I remember looking at the statistics on UVA, one of the best of the State universities in the country, at the time that this bill was passed. For out of State students, it was something like $16,000, for in State it was something like $4,000. Obviously it's gone up since.

But if that doesn't mean the difference between where you go and where you don't go, or whether you go, I don't know what does. It's typical that this reduces tuition sometimes as much as a quarter or a third. When you have low in-State tuition, the whole point of States doing this is to get more and more people into college. It means that most of it is subsidized, and that's what the Congress does here.

Let me ask you, Ms. Valentine, just to clear up for the record, there were some stories, a story or two in the press about what looked like pretty minor amounts of money that concerned you with some staff in the operation of the program. You're new to the program, I take it you were brought in to help deal with whatever operational issues you found. I wonder, by the way, we know a lot about the program from the GAO, which kept very close tabs on this program. So we are assured that we weren't dealing with major problems.

But I wonder, what operational problems you found and what have you done about them, and what about these minor amounts, for example, where somebody went to, on Christmas vacation to their family but also went to see a college that was under your program at the same time, and it looked as though that wasn't the main reason for the program. I recognize that's one person and one travel chip. But I wonder if you found any like problems or what operational problems you may have found, and if so, what you've done about them.

Ms. VALENTINE. To address the operational problem that you're referring to in terms of the travel, we've done a complete audit of all the State education office travel with the Office of Budget for the District. What we've done is reviewed every single travel, we've

identified the cost associated with every single travel, exactly where it was funded from. Fortunately, we've only been able to determine, we've been able to determine, I should say, that the TAG money that was in question was really not in question. The person that—we can justify it, and I'd be happy to share the documentation with you, because we've gone through every single——

Ms. NORTON. So you don't even think that was a problem, that problem that was in the press is not a problem?

Ms. VALENTINE. No, what I'm saying is that we have identified any misuse of funds, and it was very minimal, not to suggest that's not a problem. It was minimal. A personnel action was taken as it relates to the person that was inappropriately traveling. And we have moved to put regulations and protocols in place. We have adopted the Executive Office of the Mayor travel guidelines. We've instituted a tier system for authorization of travel, and to the best of my knowledge, that's the extent of my engagement with it.

Ms. NORTON. Do you have to approve all travel now?

Ms. VALENTINE. Yes, absolutely. They have to justify it, and there is a process on the back end where you need to justify who you saw, what you did, the expenses and receipts and you have a date certain to return the documentation. So within 30 days of your travel, it needs to be submitted for reimbursement, if that's necessary. And the advances will be predicated on what it is you're doing and how long you're going to be there.

Clearly, if you're going to add your personal leave to a business trip, that will be taken into consideration in terms of what your per diem would be for that activity.

Ms. NORTON. Have you discovered any other, well, that one instance, I won't call an operational difficulty, but have you discovered any operational improvements that you would like to make?

Ms. VALENTINE. I'm looking at the disbursement issue and the relationship with the financial institutions at the universities. Because there seems to be a little bit of a disconnect. So we're going to work on that.

Ms. NORTON. Would you describe that in English, please? The disbursement issue?

Ms. VALENTINE. The money that's being paid to the universities, the invoicing for the students. So often the disbursement office or the bursar's office is not talking to another office within the organization, so there may be an invoice for a student, they don't realize that it's been paid, so there's a little disconnect, so the student appears to not be in the appropriate status for them to continue their education. So I'm going to work with DC CAP, because they've established relationships with some of the institutions that we seem to be having a problem with.

But I only have been there 12 days and I'm looking at it. I will be happy to get back to you with anything else.

Ms. NORTON. You've only been on the job 12 days?

Ms. VALENTINE. Yes.

Ms. NORTON. Goodness. Do you know of any instances where, these days, schools treat you like bill collectors. If your tuition isn't on time, they de-register you, don't allow you to register, have you had any situations where students have been threatened because of the difficulty in getting TAG money to them?

Ms. VALENTINE. I've heard from some of the staff that's a problem. That's what we're identifying, the schools that seem to be most problematic, and we're going to address those right away.

Ms. NORTON. But you don't think that comes from your payment schedule?

Ms. VALENTINE. I can't answer that. I'm sure there's probably some process that can be improved without organization. I wouldn't suggest that there wouldn't be.

Ms. NORTON. Will you pay tuition on time, when you get the money, does it go straight out?

Ms. VALENTINE. Yes. There is a 30 day turnover time. Yes, absolutely. Again, we're going to look at that, because I'm sure there are things that fall through the cracks. I wouldn't say there weren't. But I don't know yet, but that is high on my agenda, absolutely.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Talley.

Mr. TALLEY. I'd like to make a comment about that, the procedural issue with the TAG office. Several students over the years receive the letters from the colleges and universities that say they haven't received the funding from the DC TAG office. And I will say that immediately, I always call. They always come to the counselors or to someone and it always comes to me at my school, and even at Woodson where I'm no longer there this year. They still call me for those issues, and the young man sitting here had an issue.

What we're finding is that there is that linkage between DC TAG and the college or university. Usually it's the university or the college. What we have found, or what I have found is that they have not sent the request or billed the district for the funding. Sometimes they did not understand the process or how to do it, but I will say that once, I usually call Ken Howard, and they usually take care of it right away.

But the issues that I've found usually come from the university, not from the TAG office.

Ms. NORTON. That's very reassuring. Colleges of course, and universities in the United States, are experiencing something entirely new, as far as they're concerned. There's no problem like this. So they've had to orient themselves as to how to deal with this as well.

Let me ask you about residency. You know what a stickler I am, don't pay a commuter tax, please don't come over here for DC TAG. [Laughter.]

So in order to make sure that you are a bona fide resident, there were some issues. It's always difficult to have to prove your residency, particularly since people are in various status in terms of their ability to prove it. But still, it seems to me rather than have a cent of this money go to anybody but D.C. residents, especially given the shortfall, I've got to ask you about residency and how and whether you can assure me that each and every person in this program is a D.C. resident and how you can assure me that you assure yourself that is the case.

Ms. VALENTINE. I've been assured by the staff to this point that——

Ms. NORTON. They'll assure you. But what do they do? What does a resident go through in order to demonstrate that the resident is a bona fide D.C. resident?

Ms. VALENTINE. If they are a D.C. public school graduate——

Ms. NORTON. Let me just indicate why this is important. The chairman and I talk about leveling the playing field. This is the one instance I know, perhaps with the $5,000 homebuyer credit, that's D.C. only, but this is the one instance I know where D.C. gets something that nobody else in the United States gets. If you have a State university or a bunch of State universities in your State, you get to pick from those. But you don't get to go to one halfway across the country.

So there is some incentive for people to say, let me see if I can sneak in under the wire here, particularly since we know people have tried to do that ad infinitum for our public schools. We all look closely at Ellington and the charter schools to make sure these folks are in fact D.C. residents. Because we don't have enough places here for our own folks. That's the background of this question about residency.

Ms. VALENTINE. We verify with D.C. public schools, after their first year, the D40 tax return is required. To get to your point, I think there is an opportunity for something to happen in the first year in terms of them not being residents. But I understand from the staff that it's very, they are very few, and as soon as they identify it, in the second year, then the grant——

Ms. NORTON. So what happens in the first year?

Ms. VALENTINE. There is a provision where the D.C. public school students are not required to provide that tax information. The assumption is that if they go to D.C. public schools——

Mr. TALLEY. That's not exactly correct.

Ms. VALENTINE [continuing]. And that D.C. public schools are audited, but the assumptions that they are in D.C. public schools, and the audit has proved out that they are a D.C. resident.

Ms. NORTON. I hate to do this. That isn't good enough for me. I know the D.C. public schools are audited, because we sat here and went through this when the control board was here. We wanted to make sure D.C. was not spending money for students who are out of State.

There are many, many people who work in D.C. who live in Maryland or Virginia, and they had a habit of bringing their children here. It happens all the time in big cities, that people come in. What kind of thing, surely there are things you can ask people to do, short of the tax form. On this, I'm such a stickler, I'm about to have a workshop for small businesses. I have a tax fair, you've got to show your voter card, you've got to show your driver's license with your address on it. You've got to bring something to get into any of my stuff here that's meant to help D.C. residents.

So I would really wonder about what it is that you have to show in the first year.

Ms. VALENTINE. I'd be happy to get back to you on that, and would be happy also to look at requiring D.C. public school students to provide the same documentation in the first year that they have to provide in ongoing years. We'll get back to you on that.

Ms. NORTON. I would very much appreciate that.

Mr. Ford.

Mr. FORD. I just want to make a point on that, on documenting residency. As a financial counselor, I run into a lot of students, D.C. resident students who are not eligible to apply for DC TAG because they can't show proof that they are a resident, regarding their parents' D40. Some students that we have, they work but they are not required to file taxes because they did not make enough money. Or we have students whose parents are not claiming them on their taxes, so they can't show proof that they are D.C. residents.

Ms. NORTON. I don't know if the Federal forms that people, I mean, the Feds have their own set of eligibility requirements that it seems to me might be transferable here. The last thing I'm trying to do is make this more of a bureaucratic process. But frankly, we have often found that people slide in under, and really it's costly enough to D.C. public schools. The notion that you did it to us in D.C. public schools, and you're going to keep doing it to us is a little bothersome to me.

I wish you all would look closely at that. Mr. Talley.

Mr. TALLEY. One of the issues that we faced with D.C. public schools and with the charter school is that last year charter schools had to show proof of the D40. This year they do not. However, we do have students that may have parents that live in Maryland or Virginia, and the issue with that, with me, in informing the students, is that they're going to have to still show proof that you're a District resident, meaning if your parents filed in Maryland or Virginia, you're ineligible. If your parents live in the District and they file and pay taxes in the District, then they're eligible.

My view, and trying to explain this to parents so they can understand is this, that grandparents, if you reside in the District of Columbia but the bottom line is that if you pay taxes in Maryland or Virginia, you're basically ineligible for the TAG.

Ms. NORTON. Yes, who in the world would pay taxes if they didn't have to.

Mr. TALLEY. But you have some families that try to sneak in under the umbrella, because they live with their aunts and uncles, cousins and all that. So we're pretty tight at our school as far as that's concerned. There are students who don't qualify for the TAG, and the parents are aware of that.

Ms. NORTON. It may seem hard hearted until you recognize what this city has gone through.

Mr. TALLEY. Absolutely.

Ms. NORTON. And that we don't have any State, and therefore we have every reason to redouble. I wish you would submit for the record what is the process for first year students and what is the process thereafter.

Ms. VALENTINE. Absolutely.

Ms. NORTON. Final question for Mr. Ford. You indicated in your testimony that you hope that many D.C. residents at Trinity College, which is one of the colleges that gets a very significant number of our students, but you said many of these students who are residents are not currently able to benefit from this program. I hope that some issues can be addressed in the reauthorization

process to allow all D.C. residents to be eligible. Would you mind elaborating on that?

Mr. FORD. What I mean by that is that we have students, we have adult students that attend Trinity and are not eligible to get the grant, because one, they did not graduate out of high school after 1998 or they did not attend a college since the spring of 2001. So we have adult students who are starting this year who are not eligible for the grant. That's what I meant by that.

Ms. NORTON. This was one of the most heartbreaking fights I've fought. I've tried to get students, precisely the kind you're talking about, included, and was able to get some small changes. But just as graduate students aren't covered, I literally tried to get and for a while there thought I had covered students back to 20 years ago. I thought the fact that somebody wanted to go, remember, it's the same, it would be the same requirements, but you decided to go back to college when you were 30 or 35. Yet you'd have to go through all that the TAG students went through. I thought we ought to reward those people, and struggled very hard for it.

I was not able to convince, I think the chairman understood and was with me. I could not get the Senate to do that. But what they did instead, the quid pro quo that they gave me instead was the HBCUs. They said, no, we're not going to go back, they thought there were too many issues about where these people may have been during these 20 years or 30 years, and too many issues to follow through.

So instead, I negotiated the HPU part of the bills, which says that if you go to any HBCU in the country, not just those in this region, you can get the $2,500. So that's the long and short of this. So we can't really hold out any hope, having tried very hard for those students who missed it for good reason. They just didn't have, just like many of our students today, they simply didn't have enough revenue, enough funds to go. We will not be able to recapture those students, I don't believe, after having gone through that struggle.

Let me just say to the four of you that the testimony that you've given is very important. Because when the chairman and I go forward with a bill on the floor, we have to somehow have enough familiarity with all parts of that bill to answer all questions. When I carry it over to the Senate, we've got to be able to do the same thing. And you have been very generous, very informative, in making us understand the program far better than we did before.

I very much appreciate the testimony, how detailed it was, and how your own oral testimony has buttressed it as well, I think, make it likely that we will be able to go forward with reauthorization. Thank you very much for coming to this hearing. I thank our D.C. students for coming. Let me say again for myself and the chairman that you are living proof of this bill, and therefore you encourage us more than anything even that our excellent witnesses have said to go forward and assure that there is reauthorization.

I want to thank all the staff of our program and of the D.C. public schools who have helped to make this program work.

Thank you very much and this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:45 a.m., the committee was adjourned, to reconvene at the call of the Chair.]

[Additional information submitted for the hearing record follows:]

"Maintaining a Level Playing Field for D.C. Graduates:
Reauthorization of the D.C. College Access Act of 1999"

Testimony of William John Schatz
House Committee on Government Reform
March 25, 2004

I wish to thank Chairman Davis and the members of the committee for the opportunity to testify about a program that "...is the best money the Federal Government will ever spend in this city," as the chairman said in his remarks accompanying P.L. 106-98, the law we seek to reauthorize today.

I'm not familiar enough with the federal budget to say whether the ensuing five years have proven the chairman correct. But I'm knowledgeable enough about the finances at 1855 California Street, N.W., to assure the committee that the funds authorized by P.L. 106-98 and administered by the District's State Education Office (SEO) are absolutely the best money either government has spent on the Schatz family.

Let's run the numbers for my sons Chris and Doug. Before doing so, let me digress a moment to say that, despite the negative connotation associated with the term, I am honored that Ken Howard, the SEO's senior manger for college relations, has dubbed me a "two-timer."

Chris, a beneficiary of the District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Grant Program (CTAG) since it began in FY00, graduates from the University of Texas on May 21st with a degree in chemical engineering. Texas residents this year paid $5,314 for the privilege of attending one of the country's finest public universities. Out-of-staters, who must survive a far more arduous admission process, as they do at most, if not all, public universities, paid $11,922, a difference of $6,608. If the difference in this year's tuition had been consistent throughout Chris's four years in Austin, he would have received $26,432 from the DCTAG. However, because the in-state/out-of-state gap was narrower during his freshman, sophomore and junior years, he was awarded $25,472.20. Nevertheless, two in-state residents could attend Austin for less than the price of one out-of-state resident and have enough spare change to buy Longhorn football tickets.

The Texas gap seems wide, but it pales next to the amount Doug, a freshman, and his fellow out-of-state students must pay at the University of Wisconsin. Insiders this year can roam the Madison campus for $5,140 per year. Outsiders have to cough up $19,150 for the same privilege.

You can see the D.C. College Access Act's impact in a New York minute. Without the law, four years at UW-Madison would cost $76,600. With the law, that amount shrinks to $16,040. That's not necessarily an attractive number, but it's prettier than the alternative.

I understand the necessity for public universities to take of their own first. At almost one of those institutions, including the one from which I graduated, Binghamton University, and the one at which I'm an instructor teaching writing and journalism, the University of Maryland, the in-state/out-of-state tuition gap widens every year. States desperate to trim yawning budgets or balance budgets understandably give residents preference when using precious resources such as educational facilities. Each issue of

The Diamondback, Maryland's student newspaper, has two or three stories about legislators' struggles to reduce the state's deficit without raising tuition *again*. Many of my out-of-state students worry about how they will be able to afford to stay at the university. I hope they can, but if they can't, they have the option to attend their state university at the in-state rate.

Until P.L. 106-98, D.C. residents didn't have the same opportunity. Now that the law has leveled the playing field, it would be devastating to District students and their families if the Congress tilted it again.

The College Access Act has given my children precisely that. I don't know what I would have done without it. Actually, I do: gone into more debt; exploited other sources of funding I'm trying to maintain for Chris and Doug; gotten a third job; and anything else required to send my children through college without obtaining taking out loans.

I know people do those things and others all the time, so doing any or all of those things would hardly have been the end of my world. But I want the committee to know how incredibly grateful I am that I don't have to do anything on that list because the 106th Congress had the wisdom and foresight to pass P.L. 106-98. I urge the 108th to do likewise and reauthorize the program at its highest possible level. The District's students and their families deserve it.

Record

Statement of the National Association
of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)
March 25, 2004

Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the more than 3,000 institutional members of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), I am writing to you and the members of the House Committee on Government Reform to express our sincere hope that the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999 will be reauthorized and extended.

Since its inception, the DC Tuition Assistance Grant Program has provided more than $60 million in financial assistance to over 6,000 students who are residents of the District of Columbia. As you know, the program provides grants for undergraduate District students to attend any one of the more than 2,500 eligible public colleges and universities nationwide at in-state tuition rates. The program also provides smaller grants of $2,500 for District students to attend eligible private institutions in the D.C. metropolitan area and private Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) across the nation. To date, students in the program have attended over 300 different colleges and universities in 46 states of the union.

By all measures, the program has been well managed and has provided eligible residents of the District of Columbia with a wider range of educational opportunities that is comparable to those available to students in other states throughout the nation.

For these reasons and for the benefit of current and future students who are dependent upon this program to help them financially fulfill their educational aspirations, NASFAA strongly encourages Congress to extend this positive federal grant program.

In addition, given rising tuition costs, we would encourage Congress to give serious consideration to:

1) Increasing the annual maximum tuition stipend of $10,000 to a higher amount to insure that eligible District resident students have the needed resources to pay the full difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition at all public universities across the nation; and

2) Raising the current $2,500 grant that is available to District students to attend eligible private institutions in the D.C. metropolitan area and private HBCUs throughout the nation to at least $5,000 per year.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration, I remain

Respectfully yours,

Dallas Martin, President

"Opening Doors of Educational Opportunity"

1129 20th STREET NW SUITE 400 WASHINGTON, DC 20036-3453
PHONE: 202-785-0453 FAX: 202-785-1487 WWW.NASFAA.ORG

Success of D.C. Tuition Assistance Program & D.C. College Access Program

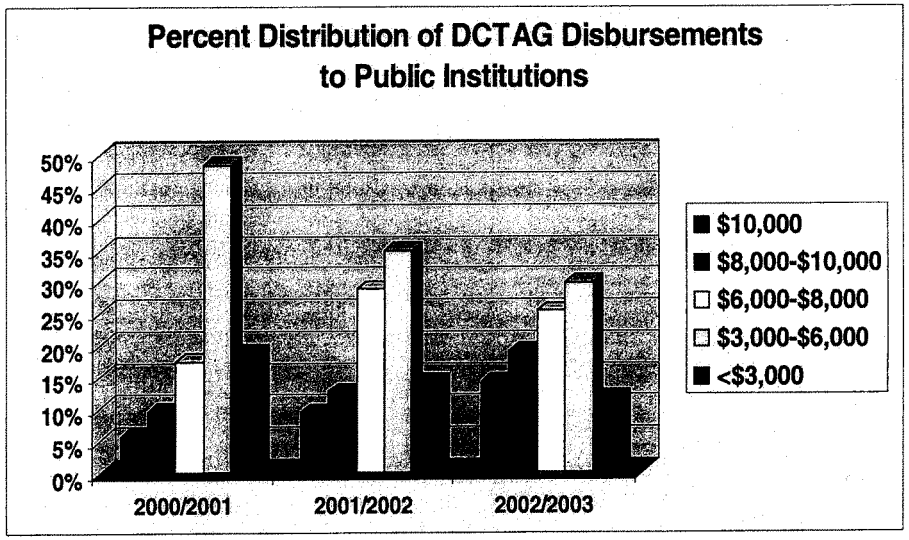
1998-2002

D.C. high school graduates enrolling as freshman in colleges and universities located in D.C. and across the nation increased **28%**

D.C. high school graduates enrolling as freshman in DCTAP-eligible schools increased **36%**

Source: U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

DCTAG Disbursements Public Institutions



DCTAG Student Initial Survey Results

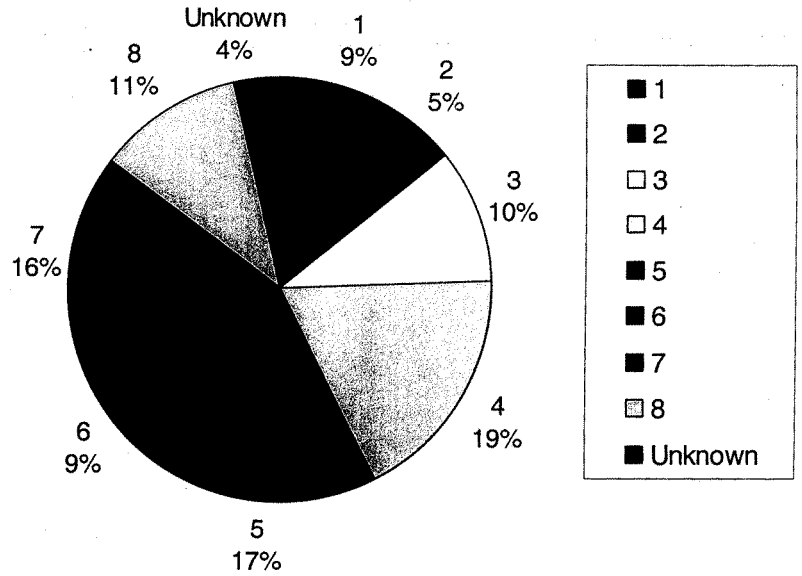
- **Question**
  Has DCTAG made a difference in your decision to continue your education beyond high school?
  284 of 380 (75%) **YES**

- **Question**
  Has the existence of the DCTAG Program made a difference in your choice of which college you may attend?
  248 of 380 (65%) **YES**

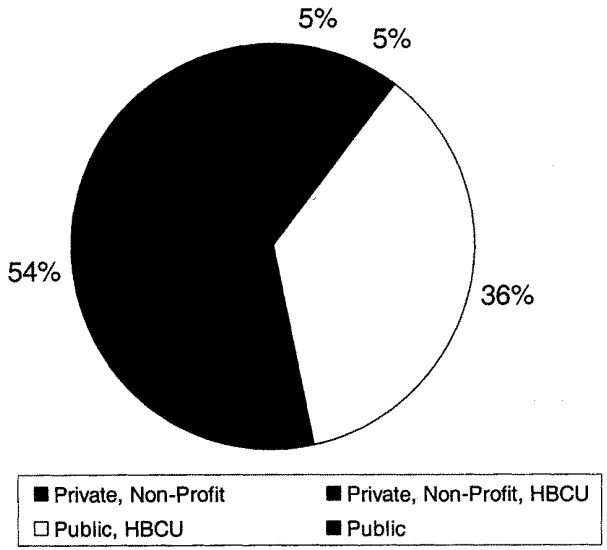
- **Question**
  Will you be the first member of your immediate family to attend college?
  209 of 380 (55%) **YES**

DC TAG Students by Ward 2001/2 – 2003/4

Wards 4, 5, and 7 have the highest percentage of DCTAG students.



DCTAG Disbursements by Institution Type



Total Grants by Institution Type, as of 1/12/2004

- **Private, Non-Profit**
  - **$2,745,175.11**
- **Private, Non-Profit**
  - **$2,844,466.68**
- **Public, HBCU**
  - **$19,840,279.71**
- **Public**
  - **$28,973,151.46**