

WASHINGTON - The House of Representatives approved a resolution today co-sponsored by U.S. Rep. Spencer Bachus (R-AL) urging President Clinton and Congress to increase funding for Pell Grants and campus-based student aid programs

In his budget proposal submitted to Congress in February, President Clinton proposed raising the maximum Pell Grant award by \$125, to \$3,250. The resolution approved today on a bipartisan vote of 397-13 calls for making the maximum Pell Grant award \$3,525, an increase of \$400.

"More than ever before, America's prosperity hinges on how well we educate our people. The high cost of college stands as an obstacle both to individual opportunity and to the continued prosperity of our nation. Increased federal support of Pell Grants, work-study and other student aid programs can help many families overcome rising tuition rates and expand the horizons of our people and our country," Bachus said.

The Pell Grants Program is considered the foundation for all federal student aid. Students eligible for a Pell Grant can use the money to attend one of more than 6,000 colleges across the country. The Pell Grant Program was created in 1972 to assist students from middle-class and low-income families who would not otherwise be financially able to attend college. In its first year of existence, 176,000 students received Pell Grants. For the upcoming academic year, almost 4 million students are expected to receive Pell Grants. Of these, 90 percent have yearly family incomes under \$30,000.

"This resolution establishes funding priorities for higher education. Both Pell Grants and campus-based aid programs have proven successful in expanding opportunities for a better education," Bachus said. "Every dollar that a student receives from a Pell Grant or campus-based aid program is a dollar they won't have to borrow. With students and their families borrowing more for college in the 1990s than in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s combined, this is more important than ever before."