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College Accreditors Endorse Passage of *College Transparency Act* for Improving Timely and Accurate Reporting on Student Outcomes

C-RAC urges Senate to consider amendments that further expand accreditors' access to crucial student outcomes data necessary to hold institutions accountable

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The [Council of Recognized Accrediting Commissions \(C-RAC\)](#), which represents six of the nation's largest federally-recognized institutional accrediting commissions, today endorsed passage of the *College Transparency Act* (S. 2511) for advancing more timely and accurate reporting on critical student outcomes while protecting the privacy of students. The legislation is scheduled for a [markup](#) in the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee on Thursday, July 30.

In a [letter](#) addressed to Senate HELP Committee Chairman Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and Ranking Member Bernie Sanders (I-VT), C-RAC states:

Accreditors have relied upon data directly from institutions as well as from Federal datasets, including the Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS) and the College Scorecard which reflects data from sources including the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS), IRS earnings data, and U.S. Department of Education (ED) administrative records. Although significant, these data are incomplete... our nation's post-secondary system needs a more complete, timely and accurate data system that informs understanding of student outcomes. [The College Transparency Act] would help address these challenges while reducing duplicative reporting burden and improving overall transparency for students, families, policymakers, employers and the general public.

C-RAC [also urged](#) Chairman Cassidy and Ranking Member Sanders to consider amending the College Transparency Act to further strengthen the utility and availability of data for accreditors recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. C-RAC appended to its letter [proposed language](#) that would enable accreditors to receive data and submit queries on institutional and programmatic outcomes in the same manner as allowed for by institutions and States.

Improving postsecondary data quality is a leading priority for C-RAC, which recently hosted a [National Data Summit](#) with dozens of higher education stakeholders in Washington, D.C. to discuss opportunities to strengthen existing data frameworks and better promote transparency and outcomes-oriented accountability in higher education.

Following the summit, C-RAC released a new environmental scan of the higher education data landscape entitled, “[Accountability with Integrity: A National Framework for Data-Informed Education Accountability](#).”

Dr. Mac Powell, Chair of C-RAC and President of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, said, “Students and families deserve better evidence of value and return on investment, and employers demand confidence that educational pathways align with evolving workforce needs. We must take bold action to modernize the postsecondary accountability framework, and the *College Transparency Act* is an important step forward in the fight to strengthen transparency and demand institutional improvement.”

“Accreditors have been working diligently with the U.S. Department of Education to inform policymakers and staff of the challenges and opportunities in the higher education data landscape, including a project launched in 2022 to identify data gaps that can be addressed to best serve the Triad,” said **Dr. Heather Perfetti, immediate past Chair of C-RAC and President of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education**. “Enrollment, completion, and post-college earnings data across colleges and majors is essential to the work of accreditors in holding institutions and programs accountable and driving continuous improvement.”

To read C-RAC’s letter to the Senate HELP Committee, [click here](#). For more information about C-RAC and the work of college accreditors, please visit www.c-rac.org.

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About the Council of Recognized Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC):

C-RAC’s six federally recognized institutional accrediting commissions are responsible for accrediting almost 2,600 postsecondary, degree-granting colleges and universities in the United States. These include over 1,400 public institutions, 1,000 private non-profits, and nearly 100 private for-profit institutions. Accrediting commissions are private, nonprofit organizations and provide oversight and accountability of diverse institutions, including faith-based institutions, historically Black colleges and universities, other minority-serving institutions (MSI), community colleges, research universities, and tribal colleges, among others. The commissions and peer evaluation teams at the heart of the accrediting enterprise are made up of volunteers, and at least one of every seven commissioners is a representative of the public.