



**Opening Statement of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Chairwoman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
Markup of H.R. 6951, the *College Cost Reduction Act*
January 31, 2024**

(As prepared for delivery)

I want to start by acknowledging that the last time the Committee tackled *Higher Education Act* reform legislation in 2019, the markup lasted 14 hours and consumed three days of work. With that in mind and in the hopes of leading by example, I will keep my remarks brief.

At the heart of the *College Cost Reduction Act* is the idea that postsecondary education should be a good time and money investment for students, first and foremost.

As a society, it is time to face the music. We are scamming young Americans. College prices are skyrocketing, and college value is stagnating. Real college prices have more than tripled over the past 50 years, and real college graduate earnings have frozen since the turn of the 21st century.

This radical decoupling is a massive weight on society, quickly approaching critical mass. We see the effects everywhere. College graduates hold \$1.6 trillion in federal loan debt. The new economics of college have left millions of families across the country questioning what to do next.

A band aid simply won't do. What is needed is a complete restructuring of the incentives that drive tuition prices skyward. This bill is the three-pronged solution.

First, the *College Cost Reduction Act* will ensure colleges are held responsible for debt held by graduates who didn't get enough value from their degree to pay down student loans.

Second, it will promote student success by directing federal aid to institutions with the best track record of increasing graduate earnings.

Lastly, it will increase transparency in the college shopping process, so students and families know how much they are expected to pay for college on the front end.

These three key features of the bill will help lower college costs for families, secure the economic future of young people by deflating the student debt bubble, and protect taxpayers from subsidizing worthless degrees.

If we think of postsecondary education as a product—which it essentially is—students are the buyers and colleges are sellers. Yet, in this market, the product is sold without the buyer knowing the real price. The product often underperforms expectations. And the product would not be viable at its price point without the injection of nearly two trillion federal dollars industry wide.

It's time for change.

Finally, I want to thank the university leaders, students, parents, experts, and other stakeholders who have offered their insights and perspectives in the creation of this bill. Thanks to their many inputs, we can debate a bill with the potential to bring lasting reform to the college financing structure.

I emphasize that this is a collective effort from all concerned parties because a collective response is necessary. We've tried "patchwork" solutions to lowering college costs. They haven't worked.

A wholistic approach is needed and it is before us today. Again, I want to thank everyone who has contributed to this bill, and I look forward to a robust markup.