



UC Student Association President Judith Gutierrez's Statement Opposing the PROSPER Act

June 12, 2018

Dear Members of Congress,

On behalf of the UC Student Association and the 270,000+ undergraduate, graduate, and professional UC students we represent, I write to express my opposition to the PROSPER Act (HR 4508) - the Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization bill that is currently being considered by the House of Representatives.

It is the UC Student Association's mission to advocate on behalf of current and future students for the accessibility, affordability, and quality of the UC. In order for us to achieve our mission of making higher education more affordable and accessible, we strongly condemn legislation and policies that increase financial burdens on students and hinder their ability to complete their degrees.

- Over 82,000 students - approximately 40 percent of UC undergraduates - receive Pell Grants, making us one of the highest percentage of Pell Grant recipients in the nation. UC students also receive support from federal aid programs like the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)- which is utilized by approximately 14,500 UC students who are predominately low-income, first generation, and transfer students. The PROSPER Act would eliminate crucial programs like SEOG and increase the financial burden on the UC's neediest students.
- Many UC students rely on student loans to pay the cost of attendance. The One Loan program under the PROSPER Act would remove subsidies and add approximately \$70Million in student loan debt for every group of UC Bachelor Degree recipients.
- HR 4508 would eliminate the Grad PLUS loan and graduate involvement in the work-study program - programs that provide versatility and flexibility to students that otherwise would be unable to circumvent the struggles of debt.
- Finally, the PROSPER Act fails to renew funding for minority serving institutions that expires after 2019, causing a loss of \$255 million. Five of the UC's 10 campuses — UC Irvine, UC Merced, UC Riverside, UC Santa Barbara and UC Santa Cruz — have met the federal criteria for becoming a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). UC is unique in that it is one of the few research universities designated as HSI. Not renewing this funding would hurt the UC and its most vulnerable communities.

With this in mind, I urge you and your colleagues to join students in opposing the PROSPER Act because it is unacceptable to make public higher education even more inaccessible for our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judith Gutierrez', with a small superscript 'd' at the end.

Judith Gutierrez, UCSA President

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