

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 28, 2014

## HELP MAKE COLLEGE TEXTBOOKS MORE AFFORDABLE FOR STUDENTS

Dear Colleague,

Textbook costs are often substantial for students and can be a barrier to attaining a college education. According to the College Board, the average student spent \$1,200 on college books and supplies during the 2012-13 academic year. The price of new textbooks has increased 82% over the last decade according to GAO, and yet, textbook costs are one of the most overlooked impediments to college affordability and access.

The Affordable College Textbook Act (S. 1704) would address this problem by providing grants to colleges and universities to create and expand the use of open textbooks. Open textbooks are educational resources licensed under an open license and made available – often online - free of charge to the public. By making these materials more widely available and widely used, students can save hundreds of dollars on textbook costs.

A new survey released by the Student Public Interest Research Groups shows that 65% of students decided not to buy a textbook because of the cost and 94% of those students worried it would hurt their grade. The survey also revealed that 82% of students believe open textbooks would provide them the best alternative.

These open source materials can be customized for specific classes and easily updated rather than students having to buy costly new editions of textbooks. In addition, by introducing this kind of competition into the market, traditional publishers will have more incentive to keep the costs of textbooks down.

The bill is supported by U.S. PIRG, the Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition, National Association of College Stores, National Association of Graduate and Professional Students, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and American Association of Community Colleges, among others.

Please join this important effort on behalf of college students and their families across the country. If you have any questions or would like to cosponsor this measure, please contact Brad Middleton (4-3051) in Senator Durbin's office or Gohar Sedighi in Senator Franken's office (4-1509). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Al Franken  
United States Senator