

**COLLEGE ACCESS ACT OF 2014**  
**Senator Al Franken**

**Bill Summary**

College has been growing increasingly unaffordable for American families. When state funding for higher education decreased over much of the last decade, more of the cost burden fell on students and their families. From 2002-2012, state funding for public colleges declined by almost one-fourth, and tuition and fees at four-year public colleges increased by 5.2% annually over the same period after adjusting for inflation.

Making college more affordable for students and their families is one of the most urgent challenges we face today. The College Access Act of 2014 addresses the problem of college affordability by attacking the problem from the front-end. This legislation creates incentives for states to invest more in higher education so that more students attend and graduate from college. Specifically, Senator Franken's legislation would authorize a competitive grant program for states, or consortia of states, to create systematic reforms designed to help lower the cost of college for students and improve the ability of students to finish their degree programs.

**A state or consortium of states that receive a grant under this bill will develop a comprehensive State plan to implement some of the following reforms:**

- Restrict the increase in college tuition to a rate that is below the rate of inflation.
- Increase need-based grant aid for postsecondary education and ensure that the state distributes the aid based on need.
- Require colleges to use a standardized financial aid award letter so that all colleges would use the same terms and so that students and families could actually compare offers from different schools.
- Require colleges to correct their Net Price Calculators to make them more user-friendly and accessible, so that students can understand the "net price" of going to different colleges before they decide where to apply.
- Expand the use of open access textbooks on college campuses, providing cheaper alternatives to expensive traditional textbooks so that students can save money on the cost of going to school.
- Provide support to develop innovative education delivery models, such as using technology to enhance online and classroom learning aimed at increasing participation and retention of students.
- Increase access to accelerated learning models like Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and dual enrollment programs.
- Improve transfer agreements between universities so students attending community colleges can more easily move to four-year universities.

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