

Dear Senator Franken,

On behalf of students across the University of Minnesota system, thank you for co-sponsoring the Affordable College Textbook Act (S.1704). Together, we represent all students from the five University of Minnesota campuses, and we have seen firsthand how unnecessarily costly course materials have increased the cost margin for students, especially for students with less. We feel the best way to deliver long-term textbook savings is through Open Educational Resources (OER). Open educational resources are free, online academic materials with a license permitting for everyone to use, adapt and share them.

We feel that this bill helps level the playing field for students. When one student waits three weeks to see if they need to buy an algebra book, and they are then three weeks behind a student who gets the book by default, all of our students are hurt. As another key student advocate we admire said, "we all do better when we all do better." We feel this bill helps all students do better.

We appreciate your co-authorship, but hope to ask for additional support. We know you have the ability to create national attention and raise awareness of this issue. We also know that you are on a key committee to influence forward momentum and ultimate success for this bill. We feel this is an entry point for promoting open educational resources more broadly. This includes the issue of having open access to public research through journals and related educational resources. It also includes reducing textbook costs in the E-12 system, and journal costs in higher education (one of the highest ongoing operational costs for higher education institutions). This is a meaty, innovative issue, that we feel fits your history as an advocate for technology and innovation, along with your heart for helping those with less. Will you please champion this cause, which benefits all students, in Congress?

We see this bill as addressing income inequality, improving individual educational outcomes by increasing equal access to educational resources, and opening the door to public access to public research. As student leaders, we could not be more pleased with your leadership on this issue. We would be happy to thank you publicly for your support on this issue, and have offered to host a rally for you at the University, with student leaders statewide, to announce your support of this bill.

Sincerely,



Matt Forstie, Minnesota Student Legislative Coalition Chair



Brittany Edwards, Graduate and Professional Student Body President



Mike Schmit, Twin Cities Undergraduate Student Body President



Prahith Chakka, Student Senate Chair