

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 851

To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a higher education opportunity credit in place of existing education tax incentives.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 13, 2007

Mr. SCHUMER (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. McCASKILL, Mr. BAYH, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. CASEY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

A BILL

To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a higher education opportunity credit in place of existing education tax incentives.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

4 This Act may be cited as the “Higher Education Op-
5 portunity Act of 2007”.

6 SEC. 2. HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY CREDIT.

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 25A of the Internal Rev-
8 enue Code of 1986 (relating to Hope and Lifetime Learn-
9 ing credits) is amended to read as follows:

1 **“SEC. 25A. HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY CREDIT.**

2 “(a) ALLOWANCE OF CREDIT.—In the case of any
3 eligible student for whom an election is in effect under
4 this section for any taxable year, there shall be allowed
5 as a credit against the tax imposed by this chapter for
6 the taxable year in an amount equal to the sum of—

7 “(1) 100 percent of so much of the qualified
8 tuition and related expenses paid by the taxpayer
9 during the taxable year (for education furnished to
10 the eligible student during any academic period be-
11 ginning in such taxable year) as does not exceed
12 \$1,000,

13 “(2) 50 percent of so much of such expenses as
14 exceeds \$1,000 but does not exceed \$3,000, and

15 “(3) 20 percent of so much of such expenses as
16 exceeds \$3,000 but does not exceed \$5,500.

17 “(b) LIMITATIONS.—

18 “(1) LIMITATION BASED ON MODIFIED AD-
19 JUSTED GROSS INCOME.—

20 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The amount which
21 would (but for this paragraph) be taken into ac-
22 count under subsection (a) for the taxable year
23 shall be reduced (but not below zero) by the
24 amount determined under subparagraph (B).

25 “(B) AMOUNT OF REDUCTION.—The
26 amount determined under this subparagraph is

1 the amount which bears the same ratio to the
2 amount which would be so taken into account
3 as—

18 “(2) LIMITATION BASED ON AMOUNT OF
19 TAX.—In the case of a taxable year to which section
20 26(a)(2) does not apply, the credit allowed under
21 subsection (a) for any taxable year shall not exceed
22 the excess of—

23 “(A) the sum of the regular tax liability
24 (as defined in section 26(b)) plus the tax im-
25 posed by section 55, over

1 “(B) the sum of the credits allowable
2 under this subpart (other than this section and
3 sections 23, 24, and 25B) and section 27 for
4 the taxable year.

5 “(3) CREDIT ALLOWED ONLY FOR 3 ELIGIBLE
6 STUDENTS.—The credit under subsection (a) to any
7 taxpayer shall not be allowed with respect to more
8 than 3 eligible students for any taxable year.

9 “(4) OTHER LIMITATIONS.—

10 “(A) CREDIT ALLOWED ONLY FOR 4 TAX-
11 ABLE YEARS.—An election to have this section
12 apply with respect to any eligible student may
13 not be made for any taxable year if such an
14 election (by the taxpayer or any other indi-
15 vidual) is in effect with respect to such student
16 for any 4 prior taxable years.

17 “(B) CREDIT ALLOWED FOR YEAR ONLY IF
18 INDIVIDUAL IS AT LEAST 1/2 TIME STUDENT
19 FOR PORTION OF YEAR.—The credit under sub-
20 section (a) shall not be allowed for a taxable
21 year with respect to the qualified tuition and re-
22 lated expenses of an individual unless such indi-
23 vidual is an eligible student for at least one aca-
24 demic period which begins during such year.

1 “(C) DENIAL OF CREDIT IF STUDENT CON-
2 VICTED OF A FELONY DRUG OFFENSE.—The
3 credit under subsection (a) shall not be allowed
4 for qualified tuition and related expenses for
5 the enrollment or attendance of a student for
6 any academic period if such student has been
7 convicted of a Federal or State felony offense
8 consisting of the possession or distribution of a
9 controlled substance before the end of the tax-
10 able year with or within which such period
11 ends.

12 “(c) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this sub-
13 section—

14 “(1) ELIGIBLE STUDENT.—The term ‘eligible
15 student’ means, with respect to any academic period,
16 a student who—

17 “(A) meets the requirements of section
18 484(a)(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965
19 (20 U.S.C. 1091(a)(1)), as in effect on the date
20 of the enactment of the Taxpayer Relief Act of
21 1997, and

22 “(B) is carrying at least 1/2 the normal
23 full-time work load for the course of study the
24 student is pursuing.

1 “(2) QUALIFIED TUITION AND RELATED EX-
2 PENSES.—

3 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘qualified
4 tuition and related expenses’ means tuition and
5 fees required for the enrollment or attendance
6 of an eligible student who is—

7 “(i) the taxpayer,
8 “(ii) the taxpayer’s spouse, or
9 “(iii) any dependent of the taxpayer
10 with respect to whom the taxpayer is al-
11 lowed a deduction under section 151,
12 at an eligible educational institution for courses
13 of instruction of such individual at such institu-
14 tion.

15 “(B) INCLUSION OF CERTAIN EXPENSES
16 FOR BOOKS.—

17 “(i) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of
18 subparagraph (A), tuition and fees shall
19 include 50 percent of amounts paid or in-
20 curred for books.

21 “(ii) LIMITATION.—The amount of
22 tuition and fees taken into account under
23 subparagraph (A) by reason of clause (i)
24 for any taxable year shall not exceed \$250
25 with respect to any eligible student.

1 “(C) EXCEPTION FOR EDUCATION INVOLV-
2 ING SPORTS, ETC.—Such term does not include
3 expenses with respect to any course or other
4 education involving sports, games, or hobbies,
5 unless such course or other education is part of
6 the individual’s degree program.

7 “(D) EXCEPTION FOR NONACADEMIC
8 FEES.—Such term does not include student ac-
9 tivity fees, athletic fees, insurance expenses, or
10 other expenses unrelated to an individual’s aca-
11 demic course of instruction.

12 “(3) ELIGIBLE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION.—
13 The term ‘eligible educational institution’ means an
14 institution—

15 “(A) which is described in section 481 of
16 the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
17 1088), as in effect on the date of the enactment
18 of the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, and

19 “(B) which is eligible to participate in a
20 program under title IV of the Higher Education
21 Act of 1965.

22 “(d) ELECTION NOT TO HAVE SECTION APPLY.—
23 A taxpayer may elect not to have this section apply with
24 respect to the qualified tuition and related expenses of an
25 individual for any taxable year.

1 “(e) SPECIAL RULES.—

2 “(1) IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENT.—No
3 credit shall be allowed under subsection (a) to a tax-
4 payer with respect to the qualified tuition and re-
5 lated expenses of an individual unless the taxpayer
6 includes the name and taxpayer identification num-
7 ber of such individual on the return of tax for the
8 taxable year.

9 “(2) ADJUSTMENT FOR CERTAIN SCHOLAR-
10 SHIPS, ETC.—The amount of qualified tuition and
11 related expenses otherwise taken into account under
12 subsection (a) with respect to an individual for an
13 academic period shall be reduced (before the applica-
14 tion of subsections (a), (b), and (c)) by the sum of
15 any amounts paid for the benefit of such individual
16 which are allocable to such period as—

17 “(A) a qualified scholarship which is ex-
18 cludable from gross income under section 117,

19 “(B) an educational assistance allowance
20 under chapter 30, 31, 32, 34, or 35 of title 38,
21 United States Code, or under chapter 1606 of
22 title 10, United States Code, and

23 “(C) a payment (other than a gift, be-
24 quest, devise, or inheritance within the meaning
25 of section 102(a)) for such individual’s edu-

1 cational expenses, or attributable to such indi-
2 vidual's enrollment at an eligible educational in-
3 stitution, which is excludable from gross income
4 under any law of the United States.

5 “(3) TREATMENT OF EXPENSES PAID BY DE-
6 PENDENT.—If a deduction under section 151 with
7 respect to an individual is allowed to another tax-
8 payer for a taxable year beginning in the calendar
9 year in which such individual's taxable year begins—

10 “(A) no credit shall be allowed under sub-
11 section (a) to such individual for such individ-
12 ual's taxable year, and

13 “(B) qualified tuition and related expenses
14 paid by such individual during such individual's
15 taxable year shall be treated for purposes of
16 this section as paid by such other taxpayer.

17 “(4) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN PREPAY-
18 MENTS.—If qualified tuition and related expenses
19 are paid by the taxpayer during a taxable year for
20 an academic period which begins during the first 3
21 months following such taxable year, such academic
22 period shall be treated for purposes of this section
23 as beginning during such taxable year.

24 “(5) DENIAL OF DOUBLE BENEFIT.—No credit
25 shall be allowed under this section for any expense

1 for which a deduction is allowed under any other
2 provision of this chapter.

3 “(6) NO CREDIT FOR MARRIED INDIVIDUALS
4 FILING SEPARATE RETURNS.—If the taxpayer is a
5 married individual (within the meaning of section
6 7703), this section shall apply only if the taxpayer
7 and the taxpayer’s spouse file a joint return for the
8 taxable year.

9 “(7) NONRESIDENT ALIENS.—If the taxpayer is
10 a nonresident alien individual for any portion of the
11 taxable year, this section shall apply only if such in-
12 dividual is treated as a resident alien of the United
13 States for purposes of this chapter by reason of an
14 election under subsection (g) or (h) of section 6013.

15 “(f) INFLATION ADJUSTMENTS.—

16 “(1) DOLLAR LIMITATION ON AMOUNT OF
17 CREDIT.—

18 “(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a tax-
19 able year beginning after 2008, each of the dol-
20 lar amounts under subsection (a) shall be in-
21 creased by an amount equal to—

22 “(i) such dollar amount, multiplied by
23 “(ii) the cost-of-living adjustment de-
24 termined under section 1(f)(3) for the cal-
25 endar year in which the taxable year be-

gins, determined by substituting ‘calendar year 2007’ for ‘calendar year 1992’ in subparagraph (B) thereof.

8 “(2) INCOME LIMITS.—

9 “(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a tax-
10 able year beginning after 2008, the \$70,000
11 and \$140,000 amounts in subsection (b)(1)(B)
12 shall each be increased by an amount equal
13 to—

21 “(B) ROUNDING.—If any amount as ad-
22 justed under subparagraph (A) is not a multiple
23 of \$1,000, such amount shall be rounded to the
24 next lowest multiple of \$1,000.

1 “(g) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary may prescribe
2 such regulations as may be necessary or appropriate to
3 carry out this section, including regulations providing for
4 a recapture of the credit allowed under this section in
5 cases where there is a refund in a subsequent taxable year
6 of any amount which was taken into account in deter-
7 mining the amount of such credit.”.

8 (b) REPEAL OF DEDUCTION FOR QUALIFIED TUI-
9 TION AND RELATED EXPENSES.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—Part VII of subchapter B of
11 chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is
12 amended by striking section 222 (relating to qual-
13 ified tuition and related expenses).

14 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
15 tion for part VII of subchapter B of chapter 1 of
16 such Code is amended by striking the item relating
17 to section 222.

18 (c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

19 (1) Paragraph (1) of section 26(a) of the Inter-
20 national Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting
21 “25A,” after “24.”.

22 (2) Section 62(a) of such Code is amended by
23 striking paragraph (18).

4 (4) Section 221(d) of such Code is amended—

5 (A) by striking “section 25A(g)(2)” in
6 paragraph (2)(B) and inserting “section
7 25A(e)(2),

11 (C) by striking “section 25A(b)(3)” in
12 paragraph (3) and inserting “section
13 25A(c)(1)”

14 (5) Section 529 of such Code is amended—

15 (A) by striking “section 25A(g)(2)” in sub-
16 clause (I) of subsection (c)(3)(B)(v) and insert-
17 ing “section 25(e)(2)” and

18 (B) by striking “section 25A(b)(3)” in
19 clause (i) of subsection (e)(3)(B) and inserting
20 “section 25A(c)(1)”

21 (6) Section 530 of such Code is amended—

22 (A) by striking “section 25A(g)(2)” in sub-
23 clause (I) of subsection (d)(2)(C)(i) and insert-
24 ing “section 25A(e)(2)” and

1 (B) by striking “section 25A(g)(2)” in
2 clause (iii) of subsection (d)(4)(B) and inserting
3 “section 25A(e)(2)”.

6 “For purposes of this section, any reference to section 25A
7 shall be treated as a reference to such section before the
8 date of the enactment of this sentence.”.

13 (9) Subparagraph (J) of section 6213(g)(2) of
14 such Code is amended by striking “section
15 25A(g)(1)” and inserting “section 25A(e)(1)”.

16 (10) The table of sections for subpart A of part
17 IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of such Code is
18 amended by striking the item relating to section 25A
19 and inserting the following:

“Sec. 25A. Higher education opportunity credit.”.

20 (d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
21 this section shall apply to expenses paid after December
22 31, 2007 (in taxable years ending after such date), for
23 education furnished in academic periods beginning after
24 such date.

