

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4533

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to make technical improvements to the Net Price Calculator system so that prospective students may have a more accurate understanding of the true cost of college.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 11, 2016

Mr. CUMMINGS (for himself and Mr. HINOJOSA) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to make technical improvements to the Net Price Calculator system so that prospective students may have a more accurate understanding of the true cost of college.

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 “Net Price Calculator
5 Improvement Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR NET PRICE CALCULA-**
2 **TORS.**

3 Section 132(h) of the Higher of Education Act of
4 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1015a(h)) is amended—

5 (1) by redesignating subsection (4) as sub-
6 section (6);

7 (2) in paragraph (2), by inserting before the pe-
8 riod the following “, and, not later than 1 year after
9 the date of enactment of the Net Price Calculator
10 Improvement Act, shall meet the requirements of
11 paragraph (4)(B)”;

12 (3) in paragraph (3), by inserting after the first
13 sentence the following: “Not later than 1 year after
14 the date of enactment of the Net Price Calculator
15 Improvement Act, such calculator shall meet the re-
16 quirements of paragraph (4).”

17 (4) by inserting after paragraph (3) the fol-
18 lowing:

19 “(4) MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR NET PRICE
20 CALCULATORS.—Not later than 1 year after the date
21 of enactment of the Net Price Calculator Improve-
22 ment Act, a net price calculator for an institution of
23 higher education shall, at a minimum, meet the fol-
24 lowing requirements:

25 “(A) The link for the calculator—

1 “(i) is clearly labeled as a ‘net price
2 calculator’ and prominently, clearly, and
3 conspicuously (in such size and contrast
4 (such as shade) that it is readily noticeable
5 and readable) posted in locations on the in-
6 stitution’s website where information on
7 costs and aid is provided (such as financial
8 aid, prospective students, or tuition and
9 fees web pages);

10 “(ii) matches in size and font to the
11 other prominent links on the primary
12 menu; and

13 “(iii) may also be included on the in-
14 stitution’s compliance web page, which
15 contains information relating to compliance
16 with Federal, State, and local laws.

17 “(B) The results screen for the calculator
18 specifies the following information:

19 “(i) Net price (as calculated under
20 subsection (a)(3)) for the institution, which
21 is the most visually prominent figure on
22 the results screen.

23 “(ii) Cost of attendance, including—

24 “(I) tuition and fees;

1 “(II) average annual cost of
2 room and board for the institution for
3 a first-time, full-time undergraduate
4 student enrolled in the institution;

5 “(III) average annual cost of
6 books and supplies for a first-time,
7 full-time undergraduate student en-
8 rolled in the institution; and

9 “(IV) estimated cost of other ex-
10 penses (including personal expenses
11 and transportation) for a first-time,
12 full-time undergraduate student en-
13 rolled in the institution.

14 “(iii) Estimated total need-based
15 grant aid and merit-based grant aid, from
16 Federal, State, and institutional sources,
17 that may be available to a first-time, full-
18 time undergraduate student.

19 “(iv) Percentage of the first-time, full-
20 time undergraduate students enrolled in
21 the institution that received any type of
22 grant aid described in clause (iii).

23 “(v) The disclaimer described in para-
24 graph (6).

1 “(vi) In the case of a calculator
2 that—

3 “(I) includes questions to esti-
4 mate a student’s (or prospective stu-
5 dent’s) eligibility for veterans’ edu-
6 cation benefits (as defined in section
7 480) or educational benefits for active
8 duty service members, such benefits
9 are displayed on the results screen in
10 a manner that clearly distinguishes
11 them from the grant aid described in
12 clause (iii); or

13 “(II) does not include questions
14 to estimate eligibility for the benefits
15 described in subclause (I), the results
16 screen indicates that certain students
17 (or prospective students) may qualify
18 for such benefits and includes a link
19 to information about such benefits.

20 “(C) The institution populates the calcu-
21 lator with data from not later than 2 academic
22 years prior to the most recent academic year.

23 “(5) PROHIBITION ON USE OF DATA COL-
24 LECTED BY THE NET PRICE CALCULATOR.—A net

1 price calculator for an institution of higher edu-
 2 cation shall—

3 “(A) clearly indicate which questions are
 4 required to be completed for an estimate of the
 5 net price from the calculator;

6 “(B) in the case of a calculator that re-
 7 quests contact information from users, clearly
 8 mark such requests as ‘optional’; and

9 “(C) prohibit any personally identifiable in-
 10 formation provided by users from being sold or
 11 made available to third parties.”.

12 **SEC. 3. UNIVERSAL NET PRICE CALCULATOR.**

13 Section 132(h) of the Higher of Education Act of
 14 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1015a(h)) is further amended by adding
 15 at the end the following:

16 “(7) UNIVERSAL NET PRICE CALCULATOR.—

17 The Secretary may develop a universal net price cal-
 18 culator that—

19 “(A) enables users to answer one set of
 20 questions and receive net prices for any institu-
 21 tion that is required to have a net price calcu-
 22 lator under this subsection;

23 “(B) provides the information required
 24 under subparagraphs (B) and (C) of paragraph

1 (4) for each institution for which a net price is
2 being sought; and

3 “(C) is tested by students and families and
4 evaluated by financial aid administrators and
5 others in the field of postsecondary education
6 before being finalized and publicly released.”.

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