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Accreditation

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July 11, 2007

Congresswoman Betty McCollum
United States House of Representatives
1714 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman McCollum:

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the undersigned higher education associations are writing to thank you for your introduction of “The Diploma Integrity Protection Act of 2007” (H.R. 773). Diploma mills continue to be a cause for concern for legitimate higher education, students, the public, government and employers.

Serious dangers are associated with credentials from diploma mills that are unaccompanied by any evidence of education gained or competencies acquired. In some cases, e.g., the health professions, this can even be life-threatening. Some individuals actively pursue questionable credentials while others are victims of diploma mills. In either case they spend hard-earned money for credentials that can turn out to be worthless. Public and private employers are also victims when some of the hundreds of millions of dollars in tuition assistance they spend annually results in employees purchasing little more than a piece of paper. Moreover, the credentials offered by legitimate providers of higher education are diminished by the presence of purveyors of fraudulent credentials.

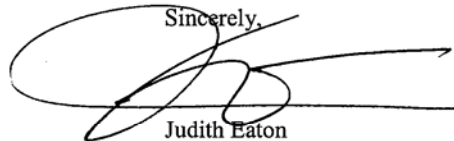
In a 2004 Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigation of the credentials of federal employees, a sampling of agencies revealed that 463 employees held degrees from diploma mills and other unaccredited universities. These employees worked in agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice and the Department of Defense. This investigation also found that the agencies made tuition payments to diploma mills on behalf of a number of these employees.

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We see the proposed legislation as an important beginning of federal involvement to prevent the proliferation of these fraudulent businesses and to protect the public. For this reason, we support the intent of H.R. 773 and urge that the Committee on Education and Labor schedule hearings on this bill.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Judith Eaton
President

American Council on Education
Association of American Universities
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Association of Community Colleges
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Community College Trustees