

Calls for repeal of Section 484 of the Higher Education Act

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NAADAC, The National Association of Addiction Professionals supports the Coalition for Higher Education Act Reform calling for a repeal of Section 484 of the Higher Education Act (HR 786) that denies financial aid on the basis of any drug offense. NAADAC believes the language will have detrimental impact to students of lower income and minority families who need financial aid to obtain a college degree.

"This provision hurts people who have gone through treatment and recovered. It hurts poor families who cannot afford treatment or good counsel for minor offenses, and it further undermines their opportunity to find well paying jobs and become employable," says Pat Ford-Roegner, Executive Director of NAADAC.

According to the Coalition for Higher Education Act Reform, "The HEA drug provision is an extra-judicial penalty that negatively impacts only poor and middle class students and prospective students. Citizens of modest means are more likely to be arrested for minor drug offenses, less likely to be effectively represented by counsel and more likely to have educational opportunities foreclosed by a loss of financial aid eligibility than students from wealthier families."

While substance abuse is a pervasive national health care issue, punishing America's youth by denying access to education is not the solution. NAADAC believes alcohol and drug abuse is a preventable behavior, and that chemical dependency is a treatable disease. Supporting the repeal of Section 483 of the Higher Education Act helps people in recovery transform their lives.