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House of Representatives
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Memorandum

TO: All Members of the House of Representatives
FROM: Representative Tony Payton, Jr.
DATE: January 26, 2011
SUBJECT: Co-sponsorship Memo for REACH for Community College

In the near future, I will be introducing legislation that would establish REACH for Community College, a smaller, more targeted version of the Reliable Educational Assistance for College Hopefuls (REACH) program to assist students with the cost of attending college in Pennsylvania. Our community colleges offer an affordable entry into post-secondary education for thousands of students in the Commonwealth every day. REACH for Community College will ensure that more students will be able to realize their potential, removing a key roadblock to collegiate attendance. This legislation is similar to HB 467 introduced last session by Representative Brendan Boyle and I, but is limited to those students who choose a Pennsylvania Community College, enhancing the affordability of their post-secondary education.

As the costs associated with a college education continue to climb at unprecedented levels, many families and students are finding it more difficult to adequately finance their higher education needs and aspirations. Tuition at Pennsylvania's state-owned universities is among the highest in the nation, with a 4.5% increase being announced in July of this year. In response to this, the REACH for Community College program would be a merit-based scholarship awarded to eligible students for the full cost of tuition at any of the Community Colleges they attend in Pennsylvania. Additionally, the program would award scholarships to students attending both state-related and private institutions equal to the average tuition at state-owned universities.

Pennsylvania's REACH for Community College program would award students scholarships if certain criteria are met. These include, but are not limited to, cumulative high school GPA of 3.0, satisfactory school attendance, and completing 100 hours of community service. Furthermore, students would have to maintain a minimum grade point average through the duration of the scholarship, as well as complete a minimum amount of community service hours.

It is my sincere hope that you will join me in this effort to make college more affordable to students across this state. If you would like to co-sponsor this important piece of legislation, please contact Jorge Santana in my District Office at 215-744-7901 or jsantana@pahouse.net.