

House Budget Committee Hearing – “Budgeting for Education: The Role of Perkins Loans”
Ranking Member Paul Ryan – Opening Statement – September 22, 2010

- Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this hearing on the future of the Perkins Loan program.
- We all share a commitment to investing in the next generation and preparing our workforce to lead in today’s competitive global economy.
- I applaud the Administration for taking steps to promote accountability and reforms to address the unconscionable failures in some of our classrooms, and promote greater incentives to reward performance and success.
- I also have concerns with efforts to further centralize decisions in Washington that would be best left to States, local school districts, teachers and parents – as well as the recent government takeover of the entire student loan industry.
- While I look forward to discussing the proper role of the Federal government in making our world-class higher education system more competitive and more accessible to all Americans, we gather today in the House Budget Committee without a budget for the upcoming fiscal year – and without a clue on how to finance our commitments to priorities like defense, health and retirement security, and education.
- The country faces \$1.5 trillion deficits, adding to the \$13 trillion of total debt. The entitlement tsunami coming our way will overwhelm the Federal budget and shred our critical social safety net if we fail to act.
- Advocates of programs like Perkins Loans must take seriously the threat to national priorities if we fail to account for our looming fiscal crisis.
- I am hopeful that today’s hearing can allow for a candid discussion on how the Federal government can promote a world-class education for our children – and how we can address the crushing debt burden we are passing to the next generation.
- To those committed to continuing the rapid rise in spending for programs such as education, we should do so by making other trade-offs in the budget. And, we must begin to reform our entitlement programs so they can meet their critical missions, and give the next generation a more prosperous, more secure, debt-free nation.