



# United States Student Association

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## Bush Budget Slashes \$800 Million From Higher Ed. Programs

*College Students are Left Behind*

Washington, D.C. – Today President Bush released his FY 2009 budget, which totaled over \$3.1 trillion. The budget severely cut or eliminated 151 federal programs, slashing \$18 billion from critical programs. Eight higher education programs were either targeted for elimination or level funded. Students across the country were bracing themselves for additional financial aid cuts this year. "Year after year, the President's budget leaves college students behind", said United States Student Association President Gabriel Pendas. "This budget falls short of investing in a vital national resource – students – who are charged with revitalizing the future of our country."

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The budget cut \$959 million from the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), which provides an additional \$4,000 to Pell Grant eligible students, \$65 million from the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships (LEAP) program which matches state grant aid funding, \$2.9 million from the Thurgood Marshall Fellowship program, which provides support for students of color pursuing law degrees, and \$64 million from the Perkins Loan Cancellations program which provides loan forgiveness for borrowers pursuing careers in public service.

The Federal Work-Study, TRIO, and GEAR UP programs received no increases in funding above last year's requests. These programs provide support and assistance to low-income, first generation students across the country.

"With funding for higher education programs declining significantly, I have no idea how I will be able to graduate without being smacked with debt until I die," said Greg Cendana, a senior at UCLA with over \$25,000 in student debt.

USSA and hundreds of students from across the country will be on Capitol Hill for the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual National Student Lobby Day on March 18<sup>th</sup> calling on their members of Congress to increase funding for higher education programs.

The United States Student Association (USSA) is the country's oldest and largest national student organization, representing millions of students across the country. Founded in 1947, USSA is the recognized voice for students on Capitol Hill, in the White House and the Department of Education.

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