

## **College Summit Shares Strategies with Congress**

On March 22, 2007, Founder and CEO of College Summit, J.B. Schramm, testified before a hearing of the House Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness and provided Congress with successful strategies to increase college access in the U.S. During the session, entitled “The Higher Education Act: Approaches to College Preparation,” several other witnesses testified about various federally-funded efforts to improve college access.

Chairman Rubén Hinojosa, D-Tx., opened the session acknowledging the nation's need to ensure that all students have the information and academic preparation to attend college. Ranking member Ric Keller, R-Fl., praised College Summit for “doing an outstanding job” in bolstering efforts to improve college access for high school students.

“Every student who is the first in their family to graduate from college basically ends poverty in their family line forever,” Schramm said. “They’ll earn an additional two million dollars over the course of their careers and their children will be almost twice as likely to enroll themselves. If [all college-capable] students went to college each year, those students would contribute an additional eighty billion dollars in federal tax revenue annually.”

His testimony followed witnesses operating various federally funded college access efforts such as GEAR UP and TRIO. Before the subcommittee members and a standing room audience that included former Congresswoman and fellow Colorado native, Pat Schroeder, Schramm praised these programs and explained College Summit’s approach around building the capacity of school districts to increase college-going among their high schools.

He offered several insights during extensive questioning by subcommittee members. Responding to Chairman Hinojosa’s inquiries about how communities benefit from effective college transition efforts, he explained that such efforts “produce measurable results [and] are ways for a community to get a financial benefit . . . but also a way to see better academic outcomes.”

In response to questioning from the ranking member Mr. Keller, Schramm addressed the misconceptions many students hold that keep them from applying to college. “We do find that there are a disproportionate number of low-income students who track themselves [away from] college or feel tracked [away from] college.”

Schramm added, “We would strongly urge any efforts to simplify the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid].” He praised the efforts of House Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller, D-Ca., and Ranking Member Howard P. “Buck” McKeon, R-Ca., to simplify FAFSA, what has become “an unnecessarily complicated process.” He concluded his testimony by thanking Congress for including college transition as a crucial aspect of the Higher Education Act.

College Summit had a special guest on hand for the testimony. Kasha Beidler, senior at South Harrison High School and alumni of a College Summit summer workshop in 2006, traveled from West Virginia with her mother and younger sister to spend a day on Capital Hill. In addition to attending the hearing, she met with Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito, R-WV, and Congressman McKeon, as well as staff for Congressional leaders Alan B. Mollohan, D-WV, and Nick Rahall, D-WV.

Ms. Beidler took the opportunity to share her experiences during the school year in helping to motivate fellow seniors to apply to college. This fall, she will attend West Virginia University as the first in her family to go to college.

During their meeting, Congresswoman Capito asked, “Kasha, what do you think?”

With the poise of a future legislator, Ms. Beidler replied, “I’m thinking this is a good program.”