

College Transparency Act

Senator Bill Cassidy, M.D. (R-LA) and Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)

Current postsecondary data is incomplete and does not count all students. Therefore, today's students and families are not empowered to make well-informed choices about their education, policymakers and institutions cannot craft evidence-based policies to help students succeed, and employers do not have the talent pipeline they need to support their business. The College Transparency Act (CTA) reforms the college data reporting system and provides stakeholders accurate and timely data on student access and success.

Better Information

- Accurately reports on student outcomes including enrollment, completion and post-college success across colleges and programs.
- Requires a user-friendly website for students, parents, policymakers and employers to ensure the data are transparent, informative, and accessible.
- Leverages data at federal agencies and institutional data by matching a limited set of data to calculate aggregate information to answer questions critical to understanding and improving student success.
- Overturns the ban on student-level data collection in the Higher Education Act.

Better Decisions

- Enables students and families to identify college programs that meet their needs.
- Provides aggregate information to states and institutions so they can prioritize, develop and implement targeted, data-informed strategies to improve student success.
- Enables employers to locate potential employees that fit their hiring requirements or identify gaps in the workforce pipeline.

Better Outcomes

- Provides information disaggregated by race, ethnicity and gender to identify inequities in students' success so inequities can be reduced.
- Promotes state and institutional improvement of the higher education system through robust transparency.
- Streamlines burdensome federal reporting requirements for postsecondary institutions to promote more time spent on student needs.

The CTA also protects student data and maintains privacy by:

- Creating a secure, privacy protected student-level data network within the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) using government-wide, industry-supported security standards and data governance protocols.
- Limiting data disclosures, prohibiting the sale of data, penalizing illegal data use, protecting vulnerable students, prohibiting the use of the data for law enforcement, safeguarding personally identifiable information, and requiring notice to students and regular audits of the system.

To learn more about this legislation, please contact Lauren Schwensen (lauren_schwensen@help.senate.gov) or Patrick Fox (patrick_fox@help.senate.gov) of Senator Cassidy's staff and Carlo Juntilla (carlo_juntilla@warren.senate.gov) or Jessica Wong (jessica_wong@warren.senate.gov) of Senator Warren's staff.