

Legislation on Graduates' Salaries Reintroduced (and Altered)

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WASHINGTON -- Senators Marco Rubio, Ron Wyden and Mark Warner introduced a bill Thursday to require colleges to disclose data about their students' salaries in the first year after graduation. The measure would require colleges to break down salary data by major or program of study, as well as require them to report more information on remediation rates, debt for students who graduate and those who drop out, and continuation rates to graduate education. It would also disaggregate outcomes for Pell Grant and G.I. Bill recipients.

The bill would also repeal the ban on a federal unit record data system to track students' outcomes in college and beyond. The previous version of the bill would have circumvented the ban by linking state unit record databases. Some House Republicans, privacy advocates and private colleges strongly opposed the creation of such a database in 2006, when it was proposed by the Bush administration.

The bill, the Student Right to Know Before You Go Act [http://www.wyden.senate.gov/download/the-student-right-to-know-before-you-go_-one-page-description], was first introduced in the last Congress; since then, transparency about graduates' debt and salaries has become a point of agreement for the Obama administration and some Congressional Republicans [<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/02/12/cantor-support-bill-graduates-salaries-rare-example-policy-bipartisanship>]. Many colleges oppose it, arguing that information about salaries doesn't accurately capture the value of a higher education, particularly only one year after graduation. The measure picked up a new Democratic co-sponsor, Warner, of Virginia. The bill's counterpart in the House of Representatives was co-sponsored by Duncan Hunter, Republican of California, and Robert Andrews, Democrat of New Jersey.