

AGENDA ITEM 6.

PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING STUDENTS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE RESTORATION OF FY 2010 FUNDING FOR THE MONETARY AWARD PROGRAM (MAP)

Submitted for: Action

Summary: The fiscal year 2010 (FY2010) budget initially approved by the Illinois General Assembly dramatically reduced General Revenue Fund support for ISAC-administered scholarship and grant programs as compared to the prior fiscal year.

Absent a restoration of funding, the reduction would have left the Commission without adequate funds to provide full-year Monetary Award Program grants to the eligible students who would have claimed grants and who applied before award announcements were suspended in May 2009.

However, in October 2009, the General Assembly voted during its Veto Session to appropriate an additional lump sum of \$205 million for ISAC-administered scholarship and grant programs. This action restored full-year MAP grants for approximately 141,500 Illinois students, many of whom might otherwise have been unable to achieve their educational goals.

The General Assembly's action followed student efforts throughout Illinois in the summer and fall of 2009 to draw attention to the effects of the reduced MAP appropriation.

Action requested: That the Commission approve the attached proclamation, recognizing and thanking students for their contributions to the restoration of funding for the Monetary Award Program in FY 2010 and urging continued attention to the value of need-based student financial assistance.

A Proclamation of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission Recognizing Students' Contributions to the Restoration of FY 2010 Funding for the Monetary Award Program (MAP)

Whereas funding for the State's need-based Monetary Award Program (MAP) was initially cut in half for the 2009-2010 academic year, leaving Illinois students with difficult decisions about how to continue their collegiate enrollment; and

Whereas students from across Illinois worked shoulder-to-shoulder with classmates, parents, faculty, and staff, demanding action from State leaders to restore MAP funding; and

Whereas MAP grant recipients and non-recipients alike spoke up for the causes of college access and choice for all students, regardless of income; and

Whereas students from every sector – public four-year, private four-year, proprietary schools and community colleges—shared moving, personal stories with the Commission, legislators, and the media to illustrate the powerful impact that financial assistance has had on their lives and their educational aspirations; and

Whereas organizers employed tools both old and new, including paper petitions, postcards, and letters along with such electronic means as social networking, text messaging, and video testimonials; and

Whereas students around the State held campus rallies, attended Commission hearings, and spoke with local reporters to build public awareness of their campaign to save Illinois MAP grants; and

Whereas more than 2,500 students from every corner of Illinois (and at least one school mascot) converged on the Capitol in October 2009 to gather, speak with legislators, strengthen inter-campus relationships, and present the Governor with a petition for MAP funding signed by more than 10,000 Illinoisans; and

Whereas these students delivered the message that they were “United to Save Education” with resolve, respect, professionalism, creativity, and a dedication to equity and opportunity; and

Whereas State leaders answered students' call to action by appropriating an additional \$205 million for student financial assistance for Fiscal Year 2010, for a total of more than \$425 million in scholarships and grants administered by ISAC; and

Whereas this supplemental appropriation restored full-year MAP grants for approximately 141,500 Illinois students, many of whom might otherwise have been unable to achieve their educational goals; and

Whereas demand for financial assistance continues to rise as Illinoisans struggle with unemployment and underemployment while tuition rates increase at most campuses, with a 22% increase in eligible applications for the MAP grant as of June 2010,

Therefore we, the members of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, do acknowledge, honor, and thank the students of Illinois for playing their critical role in the restoration of funding for the Monetary Award Program for the 2009-2010 academic year; and

Do urge Illinois students and graduates to retain their civic spirit, to remain involved in the public sphere, to maintain their awareness of and interest in student financial assistance and the Monetary Award Program in particular, and to continue to contribute to a positive future for the State of Illinois, the United States of America, and the world.