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## ***LEGISLATIVE ALERT!***

(202) 637-5057

April 26, 2012

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I am writing to urge you to vote against the Interest Rate Reduction Act (H.R. 4628), which would eliminate the Prevent and Public Health Fund in order to offset the cost of capping student loan costs, and instead support an alternative that would cap the interest rate on needs-based student loans at 3.4% without slashing important disease prevention programs. H.R. 4628 is little more than a ploy to score political points by pitting one worthy legislative objective against another.

We believe that a college education should be available to every student who is willing to work for it, and keeping the cost of student loans within reach is critical to achieving that goal. Congress must act before July 1 to keep interest rates from doubling for more than 7 million students, which would cost them an average of \$1,000 in additional repayment costs. But Congress must act without causing harm to another group of Americans who will benefit from the Prevention and Public Health Fund, created by the Affordable Care Act.

The Prevention Fund is already helping states and communities promote wellness, prevent disease, and protect against public health emergencies. Since the ACA was enacted in 2010, HHS has awarded over \$1 billion in Prevention Fund Grants to tackle the leading causes of chronic disease and mortality. Seven out of 10 deaths in America every year are from chronic diseases, and about 50 percent of all adults suffer from one. Programs supported by the Prevention Fund use evidence-based interventions to prevent heart attacks, strokes, cancer, and other illnesses by curbing tobacco use, eliminating obesity, and reducing health disparities. The fund also builds the capacity of our public health infrastructure and workforce to address the spread of infectious diseases and expand access to services in medically underserved communities. Repealing the Prevention Fund would result in higher mortality due to chronic illnesses and significantly higher costs for our health care system.

We urge you to vote against H.R. 4628 because it would inappropriately and gratuitously eliminate the Prevention and Public Health Fund. It is hard to believe that the

House Republican leadership could not identify a more appropriate offset. For example, it could have chosen legislation to implement the Buffett Rule, which would ensure that people who make more than \$1 million per year pay an effective federal income tax rate at least 30 percent. We urge the House to approve the Senate's Stop the Student Loan Interest Hike Act (S. 2343), which does include a more appropriate offset to forestall a spike in student loan costs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Samuel', written over a horizontal line.

William Samuel, Director  
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT