

(New Brunswick NJ.) – U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) today rallied with Rutgers students to oppose shortsighted cuts to the Pell Grant program. Last week, Rep. Holt voted against the Republican Budget for Fiscal Year 2012 that would slash the maximum Pell Grant award from its current level of \$5,550 to \$3,040 for the 2012-2013 school year, the lowest level since 1998.

“As a former educator, I believe it is critical that we make the necessary investments in education and sustain those investments over the long term,” Holt said. “Pell Grants are a down-payment on our country’s national security, public health, and economic vitality that we cannot afford to postpone.”

In New Jersey Pell Grants will help an estimated 213,000 students statewide and 12,289 students in 12th Congressional District pay for college in the upcoming school year. During the 2010-2011 school year 14,500 Rutgers students statewide received \$56.6 million in Pell Grants.

Yet the Republican Budget would deny Pell Grants to almost 1.4 million students including cutting 30,000 students in New Jersey according to new data from the U. S. Department of Education. The data also show that New Jersey students would see their Pell Grants cut by average of \$1,838.

“As a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, I have long supported efforts to make college more affordable and accessible,” added Holt. “If we are going to out-innovate, out-educate, and out-build the rest of the world we need to have a smart, well-trained workforce.

Last year, Rep. Holt helped write the law that made a landmark investment in college aid. The initiative invests \$36 billion to increase the maximum annual Pell Grant to its highest level ever (\$5,550). And beginning in 2014, Pell Grants will keep up with rising costs-of-living by being linked to the Consumer Price Index. Rep. Holt also wrote the law that provides upfront tuition assistance — up to \$16,000 (\$4,000 per year) — for math, science and foreign language teachers.

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