

Dear Friend,

Last Thursday, the House of Representatives passed the [Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009](#), legislation I cosponsored to make college more affordable, without costing taxpayers a dime. A key feature of the bill, which must now pass the Senate, is the conversion of all new student loans to the more stable and cost-effective [Direct Loan program](#), which Rutgers University has participated in for a number of years and has found it to meet the needs of its students. Our current system of providing federally-financed loans to students is cumbersome, outdated, and wasteful. It requires the federal government to provide private banks with capital, pay these banks a subsidy to provide students with loans, and then act as the final guarantor on these loans. By switching to only direct loans we would save \$87 billion over ten years, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

The bill would invest those savings directly to make college more affordable. It would expand eligibility for the [Pell Grant program](#) and increase the maximum annual Pell Grant scholarship to \$5,550 in 2010 and to \$6,900 by 2019. I succeeded in protecting the [Stafford Loan program](#), which assists qualified graduate and professional students with subsidized loans. The bill also would create an [Early Learning Challenge Fund](#) to increase high-quality, early-learning opportunities for low-income children; invest in my [Green Schools modernization](#) initiative; and give [community colleges](#) the tools to replicate successful programs that educate and train students in high-wage, high-demand industries. Additionally, the bill would direct \$10 billion of these savings back to the Treasury to pay down the deficit. Click [here](#) to learn what this bill means to Central New Jersey. Click [here](#) to watch my remarks on the bill.

Bringing Sean Goldman Home

I continue to work with Tinton Falls resident David Goldman to secure the return of his son, Sean. I am heartbroken about this story and I am deeply troubled by the continuing legal challenges in Brazil that have prevented Sean from returning home and prevented David from even visiting his son, until recently.

On Monday I wrote President Obama, in advance of the G20 Summit in Pittsburgh, and urged him to raise the issue with Brazilian President Lula. You can read the full text of the letter [here](#) . Specifically, I wrote the President to urge President Lula and the Brazilian legislature to take whatever actions are necessary to bring Brazil into immediate compliance with its obligations under the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Parental Abduction. Last week I met with Brazil's ambassador to the U.S. and several members of Brazil's Congress and extended the same message: resolution of this case – per the terms of the Hague Convention - is of paramount importance to our country. It is long past time for Sean to be reunited with his father.

Community Emergency Response

Recently, I attended Cranbury Day, where I met with members of the township's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). CERT members are trained to support local first responders in the case of an emergency by assisting victims and organizing other citizens at a disaster site. Members of this nationwide initiative provide an important service to their community by promoting community preparedness. For example, as the [Trenton Times](#) recently highlighted, the Mercer County CERT team helped individuals with disabilities prepare for a disaster.

CERT members take part in an eight-week program where they attend classes taught by firefighters, police officers, emergency medical personnel, and other first responders. This program teaches CERT members skills such as fire safety, search and rescue (limited), team organization, and medical operations. Becoming a CERT member is a great way to contribute to the community. To learn more about the CERT program, visit the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management [website](#) . There are CERT programs in each of the five counties of the 12th Congressional District. To find a CERT program near you, you can call your [county emergency management office](#)

Sincerely,

RUSH HOLT
Member of Congress

P.S. Just a reminder: I always want to hear from you, but please don't reply to this e-mail. Instead, please email me through my website at www.holt.house.gov , or call me at 1-87-RUSH-HOLT (1-877-874-4658) to let me know what's on your mind. Please also note that you may unsubscribe from this list by clicking on the "unsubscribe" link at the bottom of this email.