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Save Perkins Loan program

To the editor - I am disappointed in the Fiscal Year 2007 budget request the president sent to Congress. The budget would eliminate funding for the Perkins Loan program and recall \$6 billion in federal funding from colleges and universities.

This will keep 500,000 students from getting the low-cost loans they need. This doesn't make sense, as a college degree has become essential for success in our global economy. Tuition costs keep rising and the administration wants to make it harder for students with financial need to obtain a degree.

This proposal endangers access to higher education and economic opportunity for future generations. Without a college education your kids will have trouble competing for jobs.

What about the investment? One of the soundest ways of spending money is to invest in something that will provide a greater return down the road. I hope that congress and our South Dakota delegation of Tim Johnson, John Thune and Stephanie Herseth will continue to agree that our South Dakota and American kids are worth the investment.

The Coalition of Higher Education Assistance Organization, of which I am a member, plans to stand up for the neediest students and take this message to Congress: "Students need Perkins Loans - Please preserve and fund the program. Keep in mind, the colleges participate in funding and administration of these loans."

We should not step back in any education funding area. Our children deserve a future.

Carl Perry
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