

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Plaskett Introduces Bill Aimed At Making College More Affordable For VI Students

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ST. CROIX -- Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett today introduced a bill in Congress that will make college more affordable for Virgin Islands residents attending public institutions of higher learning located outside the territory, a press release Mrs. Plaskett's office issued late Tuesday reveals.

The United States Virgin Islands College Access Act of 2015 would allow college students who are residents of the Virgin Islands to pay in-state tuition rates at four-year institutions of higher education located in one of several States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam.

Mrs. Plaskett said the bill is necessary to enable college-bound residents of the Virgin Islands to have greater choices among institutions of higher education and to mitigate the strain of student debt for young Virgin Islanders.

“While college-bound students from the territory can attend any institution of higher education, high out-of-state tuition costs often place an undue burden on many of them and create economic hardship for their families. With student debt in this country totaling \$1trillion—surpassing that of auto and mortgage loans—it is important that we not only remove any financial barriers that may be limiting the choices of our students, but also ensure that they are not bound by the financial constraints of high student debt,” Mrs. Plaskett said.

He added: "Making higher education more affordable assists the Virgin Islands in that graduates who are deciding what to do after graduating will potentially be able to come back home rather than remain on the mainland with higher income options."

In addition to the Virgin Islands College Access Act of 2015, Congresswoman Plaskett is also working with members of Congress and the Obama Administration to include the University of the Virgin Islands in President Obama's free community college proposal, the release further stated.

To qualify for in-State tuition under the United States Virgin Islands CollegeAccess Act of 2015, students must: