

Congressman *Bill Pascrell, Jr.*

EDUCATION REPORT



Eighth District, New Jersey

July, 2002

Dear Friend:

As a former teacher, nothing is more important to me than making sure every student receives a quality education. Put simply, our nation's future depends upon how well the next generation is educated. This is critical for all of us. As your representative in Congress, I am working to improve our schools and better prepare our students to meet the challenges they face.

We have a large task ahead of us. In New Jersey, too many schools are in disrepair, too many teachers struggle daily with overcrowded classes, and too many families are in danger of being priced out of being able to afford college for their children. We must tackle these problems now.

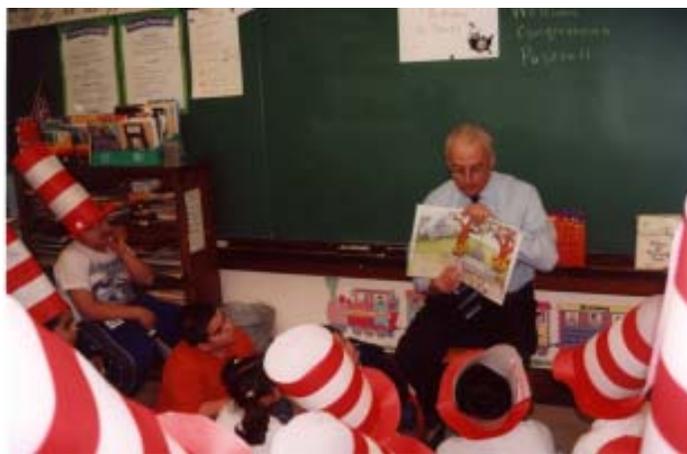
Education is a lifelong process. I am proud that initiatives such as our Congressional Art Competition and our Teens Against Violence Event have helped to foster growth in students across the Eighth District.

I hope you will take a moment to read through this newsletter. To me, education improvements are measured one student—and one family—at a time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Bill Pascrell Jr'.

*Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress*



Congressman Pascrell regularly visits schools throughout the Eighth District. Here, he speaks to an elementary school class in Clifton about the importance of reading.



Congressman Pascrell's Student Advisory Committee organized a "Students Against Violence" event to speak out against gun violence in our communities. Here, the Congressman visits with students attending this year's event in Nutley.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Children must not only have a safe school in which to learn, they must also have a safe route with which to get there. Not long ago, a vast majority of students routinely roamed their neighborhoods on foot or bicycle, taking their first steps toward independence. Forty years ago, every other child walked to school. It is now estimated that only 10% use their own two feet to get to the schoolyard. A new generation of moms and dads feel they must drive their children to school—and to afterschool activities—because of concerns about their safety.

A new report issued by the *Surface Transportation Policy Project* entitled "High Mileage Moms" examined this trend. It found the number of children walking to school dropped 23% from 1990 to 1995 alone.

The fight to set aside a portion of federal transportation dollars for projects to make communities safe for children to walk to school is growing. I believe this is an important issue for the Congress to examine. Our transportation dollars should be invested to enhance the quality of life for families, and that is what this issue is all about.

IMPROVING PUBLIC EDUCATION

Last year, Congress passed a landmark education reform bill that will improve public education and provide needed dollars to New Jersey schools. This sweeping legislation, known as the "No Child Left Behind Act," requires states to set high standards for achievement in math and reading and gives more flexibility and control to local school districts.

I am pleased that the bill also:

- provides resources to recruit, support, mentor, and ultimately retain qualified teachers
- upgrades technology and internet access in classrooms
- targets aid to under-achieving schools
- requires that parents be given better information as to how their child—and his or her school are performing
- will help to lower property taxes for New Jersey homeowners

New Jersey Benefits Under the "No Child Left Behind Act"

The Department of Education estimates that New Jersey will receive:

- \$65 million to train and retain quality teachers;
- \$11 million for the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program;
- Over \$7 million for after-school programs for New Jersey students;
- Pell Grant Funding increase of over \$200 million to help students meet higher education costs.

MAKING COLLEGE MORE AFFORDABLE

Every student should have the opportunity to go to college, regardless of their financial situation. As every parent knows, the cost of pursuing higher education has skyrocketed in recent years. I am deeply concerned that America is losing some of its brightest minds because too many simply can no longer meet the enormous financial obligations associated with higher learning.

Throughout my career in Congress, I have fought to make college affordability and accessibility one of our nation's top priorities. I am proud to be a cosponsor of the "21st Century Higher Education Act," legislation that increases funding for federal loan and grant programs, as well as the Federal College Work-Study program. While we have made significant strides in making college more affordable, please be assured that I will continue to fight to open the doors to our nation's colleges and universities to all students.

There is a great deal of information available on helping your family afford college. Here are some useful links:

www.fafsa.ed.gov/

www.ed.gov

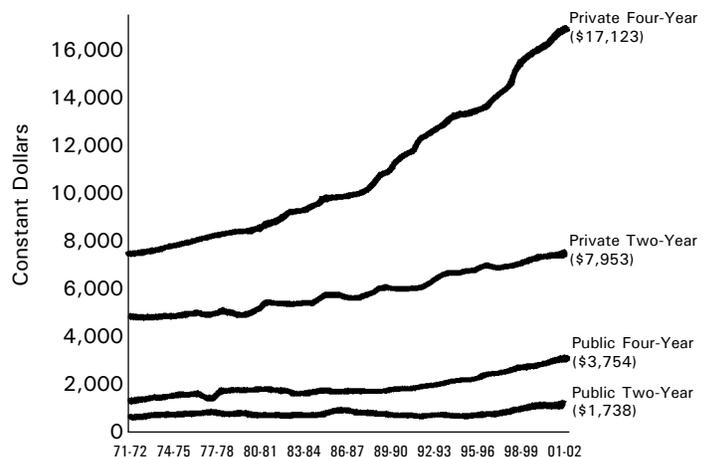
www.salliemae.com

www.state.nj.us/highereducation/eof.htm



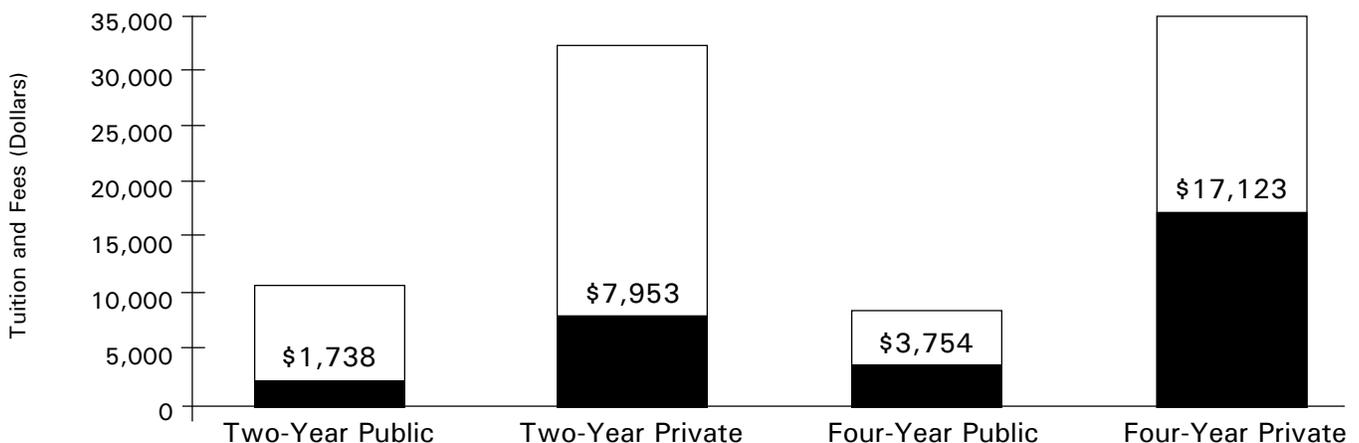
Congressman Pascrell recently hosted this 6th Annual Congressional Art Show and Competition on the campus of Montclair State University. Students from 23 high schools submitted entries. Here, the Congressman and winner Katie Shark of Little Falls stand next to her artwork, which will be displayed in the U.S. Capitol for one year.

Average Tuition and Fee Charges in Constant Dollars, 1971-1972 to 2001-2002



SOURCE: 1986-87 to 2001-2002, enrollment-weighted Annual Survey of Colleges, The College Board, New York, NY; 1971-72 to 1985-86, enrollment-weighted data from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Average and Range of Tuition and Fee Charges at Postsecondary Institutions, 2001-2002



SOURCE: Annual Survey of Colleges, The College Board, New York, NY.



Congressman Pascrell recently visited Passaic County Community College to unveil a new website, created by the Library of Congress. The site chronicles the industrial history of the City of Paterson.

STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Community colleges open the door to higher education—and provide the key to successful careers—for thousands of students in New Jersey. Nearly 1 out of every 2 first-time freshmen attends a community college. Despite being responsible for preparing so many students, these institutions continue to lack the funding they need to meet that vital mission.

This funding shortage has consequences. Too often it prevents community colleges from offering a full range of classes, attracting enough qualified teachers, or creating partnerships with potential employers. Businesses throughout New Jersey and the nation rely on community colleges to prepare their employees, as in the health care field, where two-thirds of all workers are trained at community colleges.

In the weeks ahead, I will be introducing the “Community College Investment Act of 2002” to help strengthen our community colleges. Under the bill, businesses will be encouraged to allow their employees to teach classes at a community college by receiving a tax credit in return. By placing qualified professionals in the classroom at no cost to the institution, community colleges will be able to offer practical course instruction that will help students succeed not just in the classroom, but in the workplace as well.

VISIT MY WEBSITE

I hope you will take a moment to visit my official website. There you will find information about my legislative priorities, recent announcements, upcoming events, photographs, and links to important government resources. You will also learn of services my office can provide to you and your family. These services include assisting you in working with federal agencies, visiting our mobile office, touring our nation’s capitol, applying for internships, and requesting a flag that flew over the U.S. Capitol. You can also contact me by sending an email.

The site is located at www.pascrell.house.gov.

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