WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) applauds Senators Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Tim Scott (R-SC), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Representatives Paul Mitchell (R-MI), Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), Elise Stefanik (R-NY), and Josh Harder (D-CA) on their reintroduction of The College Transparency Act. IHEP Vice President of Policy Research, Mamie Voight, released the following statement:

“The College Transparency Act of 2019 is a bipartisan, bicameral bill that will reform and improve the current postsecondary education system by ensuring students, families, policymakers, institutions, and employers have access to accurate, timely, and high-quality aggregate data in a user-friendly, transparent way.

“Recognizing that our existing postsecondary data systems are incomplete, duplicative, inefficient, and burdensome, the College Transparency Act overturns the current ban on student-level data collections that prohibits the federal government from collecting and reporting accurate data on student outcomes at each program, college and university in the United States. It empowers students and families to make well-informed choices, allows policymakers and institutions to craft evidence-based policies and practices to close equity gaps, and ensures employers have the talent pipeline they need to close the skills gap and grow the economy.

“Quality data are a necessary prerequisite to advancing more equitable education outcomes for today’s students. Data – disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and income – should support students as they choose the college and program that offers them the best chance of success and spur equity-driven, evidence-based action among policymakers, institutions, and employers to enhance opportunities, especially for the most underrepresented students.

“By creating a secure, privacy protected student-level data network within the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) using strong security standards and data governance protocols, this bill will provide students with the knowledge they deserve while protecting their privacy. The bill limits data disclosures, prohibits the sale of data, penalizes data use, protects vulnerable students, prohibits the use of data for law enforcement, safeguards personally identifiable information, and requires notice to students and regular audits of the system. This bill includes even stronger privacy protections and governance protocols than its 2018 counterpart.

“The creation of a user-friendly website will help ensure the data are transparent and informative, and the disaggregation of information by race, ethnicity, and income will help identify inequities in student success. The College Transparency Act also will streamline institutional reporting requirements, making them less burdensome, while also providing colleges and universities with the data they need to develop and implement targeted, data-informed strategies to support student success.
“This bill is a major step forward in using existing data to strengthen our postsecondary data infrastructure in a safe and secure way. That is why The College Transparency Act of 2017 was endorsed by more than 130 organizations, representing business, higher education, students, and veterans. Now is the time to ensure students, policymakers, institutions, and businesses have the information they need to promote student success and educational equity.”

IHEP leads the Postsecondary Data Collaborative, an initiative to advocate for the use of high-quality postsecondary data to promote student success and educational equity, evaluate and inform federal, state and institutional policies, and empower college choices. In October 2017, IHEP released the report, *A Blueprint for Better Information: Recommendations for a Federal Postsecondary Data Network.*