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May 22, 2013

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
2 Russell Courtyard
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Warren:

Thank you for your leadership on behalf of America's college students. As president of MIT, I am proud to offer my support for your *Bank On Students Loan Fairness Act*. As you know, since the interest rate on federally subsidized Stafford loans is set to double from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent on July 1, 2013, there is no time to lose in making your proposal a reality.

At MIT, thanks to generations of generosity from our alumni and friends, we are able to offer our undergraduates a world-class education without requiring them to take on unacceptable debt, but many institutions — and therefore many students — are not so fortunate. As you know, nationally total student debt recently surpassed total credit card debt for the first time, a perilous trend for America's future.

This is a moment when the United States needs to educate more students, both because we need their creativity to help solve the enormous challenges the world is facing and because education is the most powerful social and economic equalizer. It is the first and most important ingredient in the American Dream. In fact, it should be the highest ambition of an advanced society to significantly lower the barriers of access to education.

Unfortunately, all too many U.S. students who have the motivation and academic promise to succeed in college today find the price — or the cost of borrowing to pay that price — unbearably high. When young people start their lives swamped with debt, it can warp their career choices and delay their ability to marry, raise children, buy a house, or pursue further education.

For many American students, Stafford loans provide the crucial financial bridge that allows them to reach their dream of a college education. Maintaining the interest rate for Stafford loans at its current level is a vital step in making sure that students can get the education they need without falling into a snare of debt that they cannot easily escape.

Please let me know if I can be of any assistance to you in your fight for this important legislation. We stand ready to work with you to secure its passage.

Sincerely,

L. Rafael Reif

LRR/mes

bc: Richard Doherty, AICUM