

"Reliable Educational Assistance for College Hopefuls"

My name is Kaitlyn Benner and I am a high school senior. It is an honor and an awesome responsibility to be here and represent not only myself, but the thousands of high school students throughout the State of Pennsylvania. As a senior, I am faced with many decisions concerning my future. In choosing a college to attend for the next four years, one has to consider both the pros and cons. Needless to say, the level of education, location, and studies available are important and necessary qualities for any college or university. However the biggest obstacle in the way of many students is the price tag on that all important degree.

I first learned of the REACH scholarship program while reading the local Metro. The short article didn't provide much detail, so I asked my mom to call Tony Payton's office to learn more. Once we learned the details surrounding REACH, I knew I had to do my part to raise additional public awareness and support. I began spreading the word inside the classroom and out. I personally went to friends and family telling them what I had learned, telling them to look it up. I also made flyers outlining REACH and provided the number for Mr. Payton's office. The more I talked about REACH, the more I discovered that the growing interest and support behind it is immense. This bill is important to many families, our economy, and our future.

We are in an age where it is imperative to obtain a college education in order to be a viable candidate in the employment field. I have never wavered in my desire to continue my education. Again, the biggest obstacle is the cost of a higher education. Through the opportunity that REACH provides, students would have a chance to ensure a bright and brilliant future. My peers and I are the next generation. We are the next working class, and we are now able to vote. We are willing to work hard and rise to the challenge. Please give us a chance. We are worth the investment.

I hope to someday speak to other high school students, as a teacher. Once again I'd like to talk about REACH. What I hope to say is that because of REACH, I was able to obtain my degree and make a difference. I want to tell them that you believed I was worth the investment. I want to tell them that they are too.