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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

Letter to COHEAO luncheon

Monday, August 1, 2011

I am honored today to speak about the importance of higher education. As someone who received not one, but two college degrees I can truly testify to the necessity and importance of higher education.

When one chooses to enter college they are not only making an investment in themselves, but they are also making an investment in our economy. As our economy slowly recovers and our investments struggle to grow, a college degree is a safe investment guaranteed to pay dividends.

It is almost impossible to overstate the importance of having a college degree in today's job market. Without the investment of a college degree and with our current unemployment situation, our students cannot hope to access the job market.

Whether someone chooses to get an engineering, English, history, or finance degree—the important point is with any college degree our students are far better off than without one. As parents we have an obligation to our children to provide them with this critical investment. Without it our students fall behind the curve and fall behind the competition. While education is the bedrock of an individual's investment, it also is the foundation of our economy.

Whether it is a trade school or a medical school, our colleges and universities pave the way for our nation's future. They provide our students with the investment they need to enter the job market, and they provide our economy with a skilled and qualified workforce capable of changing the world. Our colleges and universities stand above the competition around the world and provide our nation with the solid credentials needed to be a successful growing economy.

I could go on all day and continue to talk about the benefits of higher education and how they relate to our economy, but I would rather share with you my personal story and how my education paved the way for my life.

I attended Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. I graduated with a degree in engineering, which allowed me to work for IBM. Already my college degree was paying dividends. As I continued working in the corporate world, I decided I wanted more. I once again turned toward higher education to provide me with the foundation I sought. I went back to school at Covenant Seminary right here in St. Louis. There I received a Masters in Divinity, which provided me with a different investment equally if not more valuable than the first.

My story shows that higher education no matter what form it takes is truly a valuable investment for students in America. My experience provided me with the tools to be successful not only in the corporate world, but also in my faith. College laid the important foundation upon which I built my life.

In closing, I want to once again reiterate my belief that higher education is a vital investment for our nation's children and an important factor in growing our economy. Just as college helped me to be successful in my life, I hope that every student can take advantage of the opportunity benefitting not only them, but our nation as a whole.

Sincerely,



W. Todd Akin

Member of Congress