

U.S. Rep. Grothman: Introduces Competency-Based Education Act

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(Washington, D.C.) – Congressman Glenn Grothman (WI-06) has introduced [The Competency-Based Education Act](#) to assist universities in cultivating learning environments that will allow students to learn at their own pace, called competency-based education (CBE), in an effort to more quickly lead young Americans to meaningful careers and less student loan debt. Grothman’s bill is cosponsored by Congressman Tom Tiffany (WI-07), Congressman Burgess Owens (UT-04), and Congressman Fred Keller (PA-12).

*“Making sure our students receive the best education possible to prepare them as future leaders of the country has long been one of my top priorities,” said **Grothman**. “Ensuring students have educational options that do not leave them with a mountain of debt is equally important.*

“I am excited about CBE programs because they take into account each student’s individual learning style and reward them based on their understanding of course material. Additionally, students often complete courses more quickly, reducing the time needed to take out student loans.

“The University of Wisconsin’s CBE programs have been a great success, but many other universities run into barriers when setting up their own CBE programs.

“My bill provides the framework schools need to set up and expand CBE programs that will be available and effective for students. I urge my colleagues who don’t know about CBE to learn quickly because CBE programs can help students learn significantly more quickly while taking on less debt.”

“Our higher education system is outdated, too expensive, and far too bureaucratic.

Competency-based education (CBE) is the type of innovative reforms we need in postsecondary education. This skills-based model rewards students for their mastery of the subject, not for how many hours they sit in a classroom. CBE keeps colleges and universities from becoming degree mills and instead helps students acquire the skills needed to be prepared for a successful career. By measuring students' success through the skills acquired in their program, students may be able to speed up the time it takes to get through the program and into a job. This will strengthen our workforce and do much to solve the skills gap and labor shortage that is preventing our economy from reaching its true potential," **said Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member of the Education and Labor Committee.**

"We should not assume that one way of teaching will reach all students," **said Congressman Owens.** *"Competency-based education models are popular because they put students in the driver's seat by evaluating skills rather than time spent in the classroom. I am proud to support this learner-centered legislation and thank Congressman Grothman for his leadership."*

"Core to Western Governors University's mission as a nonprofit is expanding access to education for all learners. Competency-based education has a decades-long, proven record for achieving excellent outcomes for working learners. WGU's 268,351 graduates over the past 25 years have benefited tremendously from learning at their own pace. On behalf of working learners everywhere, I want to thank Congressman Grothman for introducing the Competency-based Education Act, which provides permanent recognition of CBE. The ultimate result of this legislation will be more educational offerings closely aligned with student and workforce needs, unrestrained by credit or clock hours," **said Scott Pulsipher, President of Western Governors University.**

The average amount of student loan debt that has yet to be paid off is [over \\$37,000](#) per borrower. In Wisconsin, graduates on average leave school with about [\\$30,000](#) of debt. CBE alleviates the burden of student loan debt by allowing students to learn at their own pace and often obtain the same degree in a much shorter amount of time.

Under a CBE program, instead of waiting until the end of a semester to take an exam and complete a course, as you would in a traditional four-year college, if a student demonstrates mastery of the subject, they could take the exam early and complete the course ahead of schedule. This would leave the student time in the

school year to begin another class and theoretically complete several classes in the CBE program in the same time it takes a student learning under a traditional education model to finish one. So, they would have less time to accumulate mountains of student loan debt.

The [University of Wisconsin](#) is a leader in CBE and has seen the program save students thousands of dollars, allow for flexible school schedules, and deliver the same quality of results as traditional time-based education programs. Two of their most popular CBE programs are in health care and Information Technology (IT).