JUL 24, 2013

TESTER STATEMENT ON STUDENT LOANS

(U.S. SENATE) - Senator Jon Tester today released the following statement after voting to pass the Bipartisan Student Loan Certainty Act, which will lower student loan interest rates and keep college affordable for thousands of Montanans. The measure passed the Senate by a vote of 81 to 18:

"College must be affordable to build a stronger Montana economy, and this bipartisan measure will help more Montanans go to school this fall. I will keep pushing to lower loan rates, keep student debt loads manageable, and ensure that higher education is within reach for all Montanans."

The *Bipartisan Student Loan Certainty Act* lowers federally provided Stafford Loans for undergraduate students to 3.86 percent. It also places caps on individual student loan rates.

Tester voted for two earlier proposals to keep the rates fixed at 3.4 percent, but neither earned enough votes to pass. As a result, rates doubled earlier this month. If Congress does not act, Montana students will be hit with the 6.8 percent rate when applying for new loans this fall.

Over 20,000 Montana students use federal student loans to pay for their education each year.

The measure now heads to the House of Representatives, where it is expected to pass.