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December, 7, 2011

Honorable Rob Portman
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Portman:

We write to you today to make you aware of a letter being circulated in the United States Senate by your colleagues, Senators Tom Harkin and Lamar Alexander, addressed to Secretary Panetta. We encourage you to consider signing the letter with them.

The letter asks Secretary Panetta to delay the implementation of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is scheduled to go in effect on January 1, 2012, under the Military Tuition Assistance (TA) Program.

The higher education community has raised concerns that the MOU was drafted in such a way as to infringe on the educational integrity and academic plans of colleges and universities. While agreeing with the principles, concerns about how the MOU was drafted and some of the provisions within the MOU have caused many colleges and universities in Ohio and across the country to not yet sign the agreement. This could result in confusion and access issues for the very military personnel the program is trying to assist.

Delaying the implementation will allow the Department of Defense to work with the higher education community to rewrite the MOU and reissue a revised document at a later date. Your support is important not just for the higher education community but also for our men and women in our military.

You would be joining your fellow Senator from Ohio, Sherrod Brown as well as distinguished members of the Republican leadership including Senators Roy Blunt and Lamar Alexander.

We thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Mel Severns, President
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Registrars and Admissions Officers