United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

May 25, 2011

Congressional Committees

Subject: *Federal Student Loans: Patterns in Tuition, Enrollment, and Federal Stafford Loan Borrowing Up to the 2007-08 Loan Limit Increase*

Although a postsecondary education is vitally important to many individuals and the nation's ability to compete globally, high college tuition rates are prompting concerns that it may remain an elusive goal for some. To help students finance their education, Congress recently raised the ceiling on the amount individual students can borrow under the federal Stafford Loan program (referred to in legislation as "loan limits").[1] Congress initially did so for first- and second-year undergraduate students as well as for graduate and professional students in academic year (AY) 2007-08,[2] and subsequently for all qualified undergraduate students receiving unsubsidized Stafford loans in AY 2008-09.[3] The Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act of 2008 directed GAO to assess the impact of these increases in the loan limits on tuition and other expenses and borrowing.[4] Since information was available only on the first loan limit increase, we focused on the AY 2007-08 loan limit increase, framing our study with three key questions:

(1) What are the patterns in prices and undergraduate enrollment at institutions of higher education since the AY 2007-08 loan limit increases took effect?

(2) To what extent did undergraduate students borrow Stafford loans at their maximum levels in AY 2007-08?

(3) What are the characteristics of students in AY 2007-08 who borrowed more than the prior loan limits?

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[1]For purposes of this report, when we refer to "loan limits," we mean annual loan limits, not aggregate limits.

[2]Pub. L. No. 109-171, § 8005, 120 Stat. 4, 158 (2006). According to our analysis of Education documents, these increases were the first changes to Stafford loan limits since AY 1993-94. For undergraduate students, these limits reflect an increase of $875 or $1,000, with the loan limits after the increase ranging from $3,500 to $8,500 depending on a student's class level, dependency status, and whether the student was receiving a subsidized or an unsubsidized loan.

[3]Pub. L. No. 110-227, § 2, 122 Stat. 740 (2008).

[4]Id. § 9, 122 Stat. 740, 748. As agreed with your staff, we did not assess the increased loan limit's impact on private loan borrowing.

To determine patterns in college prices since the AY 2007-08 loan limit increase, we analyzed data from two U.S. Department of Education (Education) databases.[5] We used three descriptors to study postsecondary prices—tuition and required fees, total price of attendance, and net price after grants. Using the Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS), we analyzed the *tuition and required fees* from AYs 1999-2000 through 2009-10 that institutions charge. Tuition and fees data are weighted by undergraduate enrollment. Using the data from the three most recent National Postsecondary Student Aid Surveys (NPSAS) (AYs 1999-2000, 2003-04, and 2007-08), we analyzed two other descriptors of price:

- *total price of attendance*—what a typical student would pay for tuition and required fees, books and supplies, room and board, and other personal expenses, and

- *net price after grants*—the total price of attendance minus all grant aid received by a typical student.

To determine patterns in undergraduate student enrollment, we used IPEDS to analyze enrollment trends from AYs 1999-2000 through 2009-10.

To determine the extent to which students were borrowing Stafford loans at their maximum levels in AY 2007-08, we used NPSAS data. For each loan type, we analyzed and compared the proportion of eligible borrowers who received their maximum amount in AY 2007-08 and AY 2003-04. To determine the characteristics of student borrowers in AY 2007-08, we analyzed available NPSAS data on institutional characteristics (geographic region and sector) and student characteristics (attendance status, dependency status, and race and ethnicity). Since the most recent NPSAS data available for our analysis is AY 2007-08, we were not able to identify any patterns after this increase in the loan limits.[6]

We determined that IPEDS and NPSAS data are sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report by testing it for accuracy and completeness, reviewing documentation about systems used to produce the data, and interviewing agency officials. Throughout this report, all data discussed from NPSAS are statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence interval unless otherwise noted. Further, unless otherwise noted, all percentage estimates are within 5 percentage points.

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[5]Our scope includes analyses of patterns in tuition, enrollment, and borrowing at institutions of higher education in the 50 states and the District of Columbia that participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs and that are degree-granting. Moreover, our scope includes four major types of institutions: 2-year public, 4-year public, 4-year nonprofit, as well as 2-year and 4-year for-profit. We grouped 2- and 4-year for-profit institutions together because about half of the institutions that classify themselves as 4-year award mainly 2-year degrees. Given that we defined our population of institutions of higher education as degree-granting, our analysis excludes less than 2-year for profit institutions that award certificates.

[6]For tuition and required fees as well as enrollment we use data from IPEDS that allowed us to study the 3 years after this increase in the loan limits (i.e., AYs 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10).

We supplemented these data with interviews with officials from seven institutions of higher education that participate in federal financial aid programs. We selected this nonprobability sample to reflect a range of institutional sectors, regions, undergraduate enrollment sizes, and admission selectivity levels. We interviewed representatives from postsecondary education associations, experts, and officials from Education. In addition, we reviewed reports and other information relevant to these issues. We also reviewed relevant federal laws. Overall, these analyses are descriptive and do not necessarily indicate a linkage between increases in the loan limits and changes in tuition or borrowing.

We conducted this performance audit from October 2010 through May 2011 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions on our audit objectives.

In summary, we found that:

- After the change to the Stafford loan limits beginning in AY 2007-08, the price and the numbers of undergraduate students enrolling in the nation's institutions of higher education increased at a rate generally consistent with prior years. This pattern was consistent across most institutional sectors.

- In terms of students borrowing Stafford loans, between AY 2003-04 and AY 2007-08, there was a decline in the proportion of eligible borrowers who borrowed their maximum—an amount that varies based on students' financial and personal circumstances, but is ultimately statutorily capped. These declines in borrowing were largely driven by first- and second-year students.

- A snapshot look at first- and second-year students in AY 2007-08 who borrowed more than they could have under the previous loan limits showed that they primarily attended college exclusively full-time, were dependent students, and were most commonly enrolled in public 4-year institutions. When we compared these borrowers to all other first- and second-year Stafford loan borrowers, we found similarities across many characteristics, with the exception of dependency status and institutional sector.

Background

To help students pay for college, several forms of financial aid are available through governmental, institutional, and private sources, as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Major Aid Programs for Undergraduate Students, AYs 1999-2000, 2003-2004, and 2007-2008

(In millions of AY 2008-09 constant dollars)

	1999-2000	2003-2004	2007-2008
Federal Stafford Loans	$23,783	$30,745	$36,224
Federal Pell Grants	9,312	14,881	15,173
Federal PLUS Loans	4,244	7,299	7,955
Federal tax benefits	4,590	5,550	5,890
State grants	5,119	6,841	8,111
Institutional grants	14,240	18,170	22,160
Private loans	3,110	7,580	17,670

Source: College Board.

Note: Students generally do not need to repay grants while loans must be repaid by the student or their family. Moreover, grant aid in particular provides assistance to those whose incomes are lower, on average, than is the case with tax preferences. For more information on federal aid and tax preferences, see GAO-08-717T.

The Stafford Loan program is the largest source of federal financial aid available to postsecondary students. In AY 2009-10, 35 percent of undergraduate students participated in the program, which provided an estimated $56.1 billion dollars to eligible students through subsidized and unsubsidized loans.[7] To qualify for a subsidized loan, students must have a financial need as determined under federal law. A student's financial aid need is determined by a formula that subtracts a student's expected family contribution (EFC) and certain other estimated financial assistance from their total price of attendance.[8] In contrast to subsidized loans, students can borrow unsubsidized loans to pay for educational expenses regardless of their financial need. Depending on their educational expenses and level of financial need, a student may be eligible to receive both subsidized and unsubsidized loans, which is generally referred to as a combined loan.

The loan amount students can borrow is determined in part by their total price of attendance and financial circumstances. As shown in table 2, there is a statutory loan limit for Stafford loans that varies by a student's academic class level and dependency status (i.e., dependent or independent) and the type of loan.[9] For unsubsidized loans, for example, independent students have higher loan limits than dependent students. Beginning with AY 2007-08, Congress raised the annual loan limits for first- and second-year undergraduate students.[10] Statutory loan limits were increased again beginning with AY 2008-09. For this subsequent increase beginning with AY 2008-09, undergraduate

[7]The federal government pays the interest on behalf of subsidized loan borrowers while the student is in school. Unsubsidized loan borrowers are responsible for all interest costs. Regardless of loan type, borrowers must be either a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen, and be enrolled at least half time in a degree or certificate program.

[8]The EFC represents the amount the applicant and the applicant's family can reasonably be expected to contribute toward the applicant's postsecondary education. Throughout this report, when we use the phrase "total price of attendance" in the context of the legal requirements for the Stafford Loan program, we use it to refer to "cost of attendance" as that phrase is defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1087ll.

[9]Students who are 24 years of age or older are considered independent. Younger students can be also classified as independent under certain circumstances, such if they are married or are on active military duty.

[10]Pub. L. No. 109-171, § 8005(b), 120 Stat. 4, 158 (2006).

students in all class levels could borrow an additional $2,000 in unsubsidized or combined loans per year.

Table 2: Statutory Stafford Loan Limits before and after the Increase: Comparison of AY 2006-07 and AY 2007-08

Class level	Academic year	Subsidized loan	Unsubsidized loan	Combined total
Annual loan limits for dependent students				
1st-year	2006-07	$2,625	$2,625	$2,625
	2007-08	3,500	3,500	3,500
2nd year	2006-07	3,500	3,500	3,500
	2007-08	4,500	4,500	4,500
Annual loan limits for independent students				
Class level	**Academic year**	**Subsidized loan**	**Unsubsidized loan**	**Combined total**
1st-year	2006-07	2,625	6,625	6,625
	2007-08	3,500	7,500	7,500
2nd year	2006-07	3,500	7,500	7,500
	2007-08	4,500	8,500	8,500

Source: GAO analysis of relevant federal laws.

There have been some notable changes in the availability of financial aid and in the economy since the AY 2007-08 loan limit increase. Specifically, between AY 2007-08 and AY 2009-10, the maximum award available from the Pell Grant Program rose and the Program's EFC eligibility threshold also increased, according to Education documents.[11] In addition, according to a report published by the State Higher Education Executive Officers, the recent economic recession has reduced state revenue, resulting in an overall reduction in states' support for higher education—the primary source of funding for institutional operations. At the same time, the resulting credit crisis had affected the availability of private student loans. As GAO previously reported, many of the private lenders exited the market in response to limited access to capital resulting from the credit crisis, according to select lenders, researchers, and experts. Lenders that continued their private student loans programs reportedly tightened their lending practices.[12] As these private loans declined, there was a significant increase in the total dollar amount of unsubsidized loans issued to students between AY 2007-08 and AY 2009-10.

Postsecondary Prices and Enrollment Patterns Changed Little after the AY 2007-08 Increases to Stafford Loan Limits

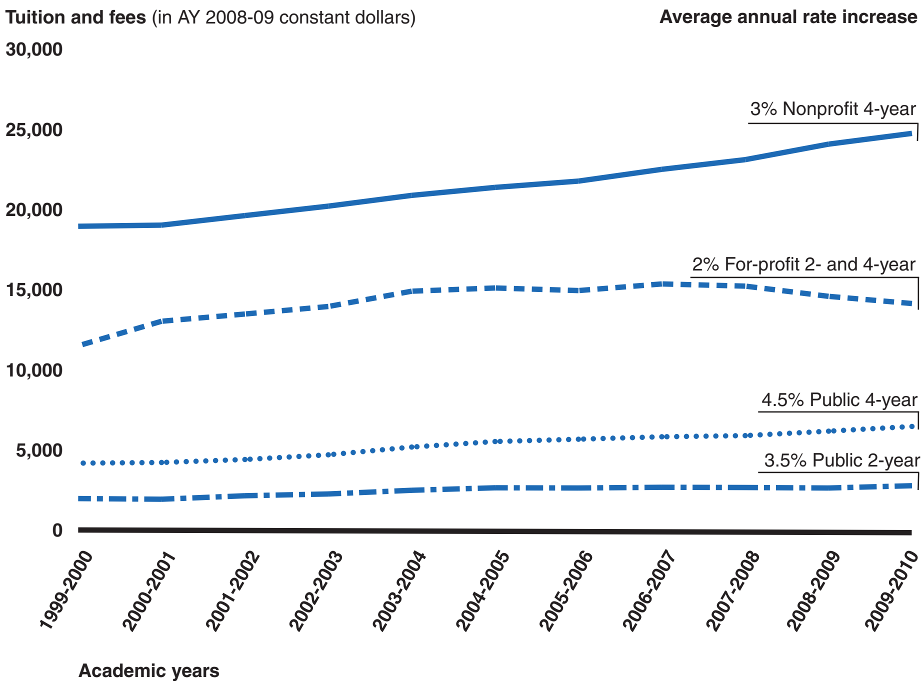
After the change to the Stafford loan limits took effect beginning in AY 2007-08, the price at and the numbers of undergraduate students enrolling in the nation's institutions of higher education generally continued to increase. As shown in figure 1, the tuition and required fees that most institutions charge undergraduate students generally rose at an

[11]Pell Grants are need-based grants for undergraduate students who are enrolled in a degree or certificate program.

[12]GAO, *Higher Education: Factors Lenders Consider in Making Lending Decisions for Private Education Loans*, GAO-10-86R (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 17, 2009).

average annual rate of about 2 to nearly 5 percent from AY 1999-2000 through AY 2009-10.[13] The one exception to this pattern was at for-profit institutions, where the average annual rate decreased by about 4 percent since AY 2007-08.

Figure 1: Tuition and Required Fees, AYs 1999-2000 to 2009-10, for Full-time Undergraduate Students



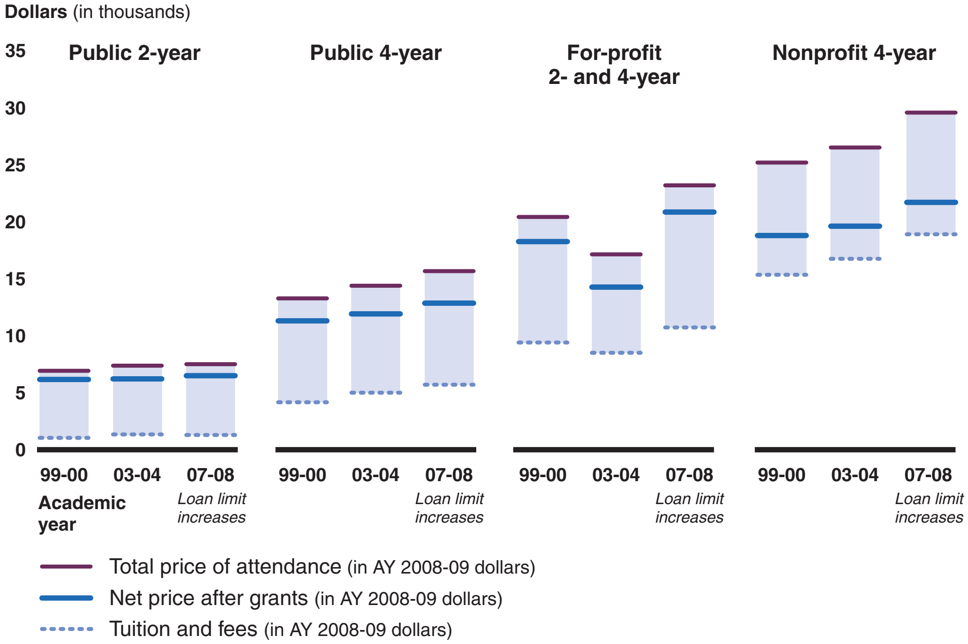
Source: GAO analysis of IPEDS data.

While nearly all students are expected to pay tuition and required fees (and thus this measure is easiest to compare across sectors), this measure does not necessarily reflect the final cost that students may incur since they do not include living and other expenses or account for grant aid. When we analyzed two other measures of price—total price of attendance and net price after grants—that consider these other factors, we found that they both increased in the year this loan limit took effect, following a recent pattern of increases. (See fig. 2.) According to Education data, between AY 2003-04 and AY 2007-08 the largest dollar increases occurred at for-profit institutions, where total price of attendance increased by $6,054 and net price after grant aid increased by $6,583. For both measures these increases in AY 2007-08 were preceded by decreases in AY 2003-04. For the other three sectors during this period, average total price of attendance and net price after grants increased slightly more than in the previous period. For example, at public 4-year institutions, the average total price of attendance increased by $1,280 and net price after grants increased by $928. The years chosen to measure increases in average total price of attendance and net price after grants may make a difference.

[13]The averages for tuition and fees, total price of attendance, and net price after grants are reported in AY 2008-09 constant dollars.

Between AYs 1999-2000 and 2007-08, for example, students attending nonprofit 4-year institutions experienced the greatest increase among the four sectors.[14]

Figure 2: Tuition and Fees, Total Price of Attendance, and Net Price after Grants, AYs 1999-2000, 2003-04, and 2007-08



Source: GAO analysis of NPSAS data.

Note: The tuition and fees data from NPSAS displayed in this figure are lower than the tuition and fees data from IPEDS that we previously discuss because the NPSAS data includes part-time students whereas the data from IPEDS displays data only for full-time undergraduates.

As shown in figure 2, while total price of attendance and net price after grants increased across all sectors, there can be considerable differences between these two measures of price. Grant aid, which students generally do not need to repay, lowers a student's total price of attendance and may influence the amount some students need to borrow to pay for a postsecondary education. The average amount of grant aid received by students varies by institutional sector: students attending institutions with higher total prices of attendance generally receive more grant aid on average. In AY 2007-08, for example, students attending nonprofit 4-year and for-profit institutions had the highest average total price of attendance ($29,561 and $23,182, respectively). However, average grant aid helped to lower net price to an average of $21,688 for students at nonprofit 4-year institutions and $20,842 at for-profit institutions. Students attending public 2-year institutions had the lowest average total price of attendance ($7,495) and net price after grants ($6,487) compared with undergraduates attending other institutions in other sectors.

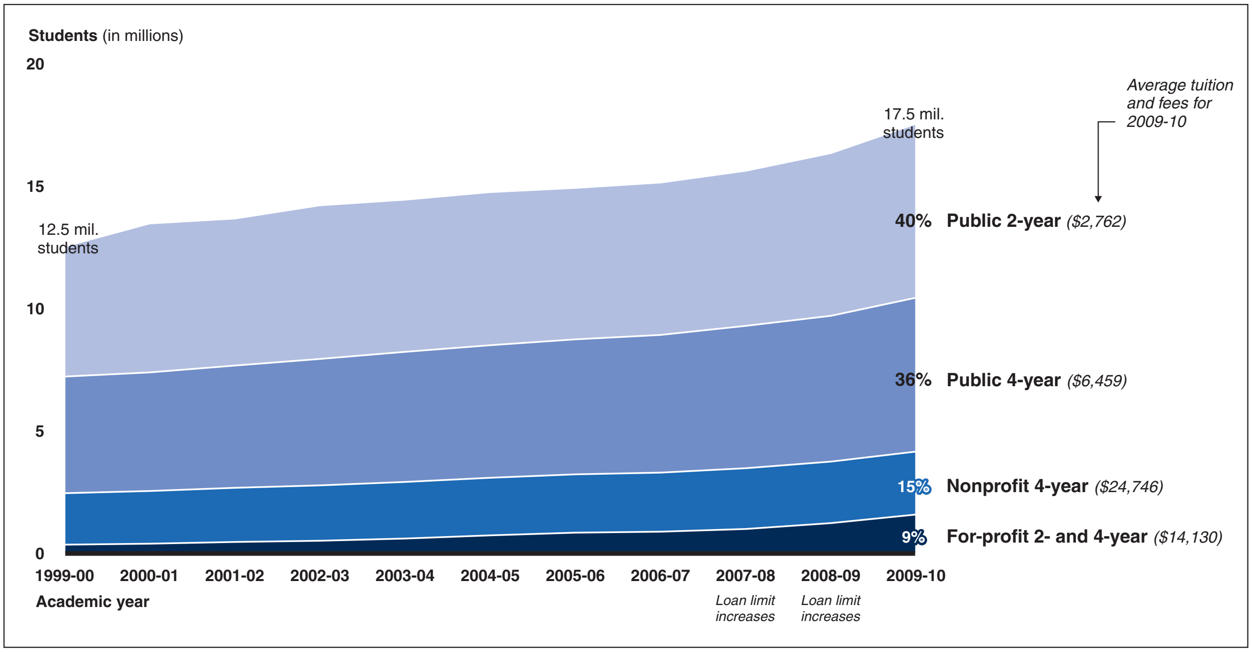
According to experts and administrators we interviewed at several colleges, a number of factors influence increases in prices, such as the cost of maintaining and operating facilities and providing instruction (e.g., total compensation). Moreover, several officials at

[14]The most recent NPSAS data for total price of attendance and net price after grants are from AY 2007-08.

public institutions said that to compensate for losses in revenue due to state budget cuts, there were tuition increases. For example, officials at one large public university system said that there were tuition increases of 30 percent in AY 2003-04 and 35 percent in AY 2009-10. None of the administrators we spoke with cited the availability of federal student aid, including increases in the loan limits, as a factor in their rationale for raising prices.

As with prices, enrollments followed an upward trend. As shown in figure 3, enrollment in institutions of higher education has been rising for more than a decade, with total enrollment at about 17.5 million students in AY 2009-10.

Figure 3: Enrollment in Degree-granting Institutions of Higher Education by Sector and Share of Students, AYs 1999-2000 to 2009-10 for Full- and Part-time Undergraduate Students



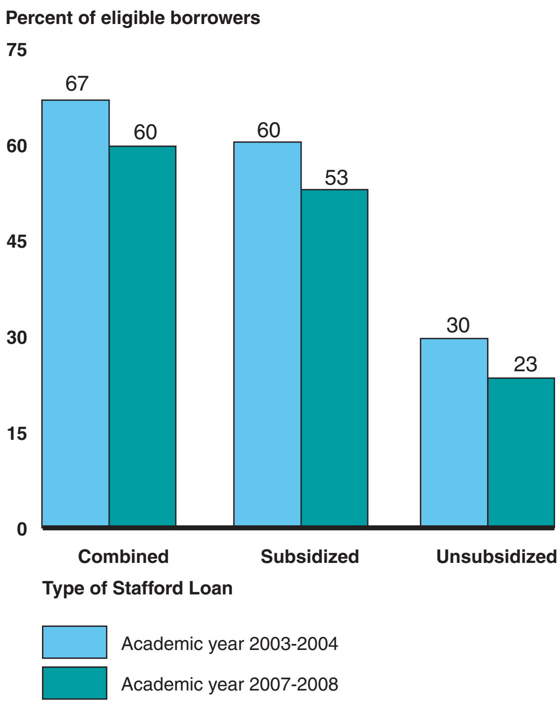
Source: GAO analysis of IPEDS data.

In the 3 academic years after the increase to the loan limit that took effect beginning in AY 2007-08, enrollment rose by about 2 million students (a 12 percent increase). While enrollment rose across all institutional sectors, the rate of growth varied, according to Education data. Two-year public institutions, the largest and the least expensive among the four sectors, had the greatest increases in overall student enrollment. Meanwhile, for-profit institutions had the largest enrollment increases in percentage terms, but they represent a relatively small segment of overall student enrollment. (See encl. I for information about student enrollment and sector growth rate.) For these two sectors, several administrators and experts said that the growth in enrollment is partly due to the economic recession, which increased the number of students seeking career-oriented programs offered in a flexible and convenient manner.

Proportions of Borrowers Taking Out Maximum Loan Amounts Declined after Loan Limits Increase

Between AY 2003-04 and AY 2007-08, there was a decline in the proportion of eligible Stafford loan borrowers who borrowed their maximum—an amount that varies based on their financial and personal circumstances, but is ultimately statutorily capped.[15] For example, whereas a student with a lower total price of attendance or greater financial resources might be eligible to borrow a maximum of $600, another student with a higher total price of attendance or fewer financial resources might be eligible to borrow $3,500—the statutory limit for dependent first-year students in AY 2007-08. According to Education data, declines in maximum borrowing occurred across all three Stafford loan types, as shown in figure 4. For example, the percentage of borrowers taking out their maximum in subsidized loans—whereby the federal government pays the interest on the loan while the student is in school—dropped from 60 to 53 percent.

Figure 4: Proportion of Eligible Borrowers Who Received Their Maximum Amount in AY 2003-04 and AY 2007-08, by Stafford Loan Type



Source: GAO analysis of NPSAS data.

These declines in borrowing were largely driven by first- and second-year students, who made up the majority—about 60 percent—of all borrowers. While borrowing by eligible first-year students fell by less than 10 percentage points for each loan type, borrowing by

[15]Because student borrowing of Stafford loans is limited by their financial need (for subsidized loans) or by their total price of attendance (for subsidized and unsubsidized loans), some students' maximum amount is the statutory limit, while for others, it is a lesser amount. Of those who received their maximum amount in AY 2007-08, 78 percent of combined borrowers, 83 percent of subsidized borrowers, and 72 percent of unsubsidized borrowers borrowed an amount equal to the statutory limits.

second-year students declined more sharply, ranging from a 12-point percentage drop for unsubsidized loans to a 21-point percentage drop for subsidized loans. In contrast, the proportions of third, fourth, and fifth-year borrowers who took out the maximum amounts generally showed little or no change. It is difficult to discern, with only 1 year of data available after this loan limit increase, whether this decline is part of a longer term pattern as well as what factors account for the drop. According to Education officials, a similar decline occurred after the AY 1993-94 increase in loan limits, but borrowing levels later increased. In addition, according to several college administrators we spoke with, the increased availability of grant aid for certain students from federal, state, or institutional sources may have decreased the amount they were eligible to borrow in AY 2007-08. For example, the Academic Competitiveness (AC) Grant Program began awarding grants to certain low-income first- and second-year students in AY 2006-07. The AC Grant Program will sunset at the conclusion of AY 2010-11.[16]

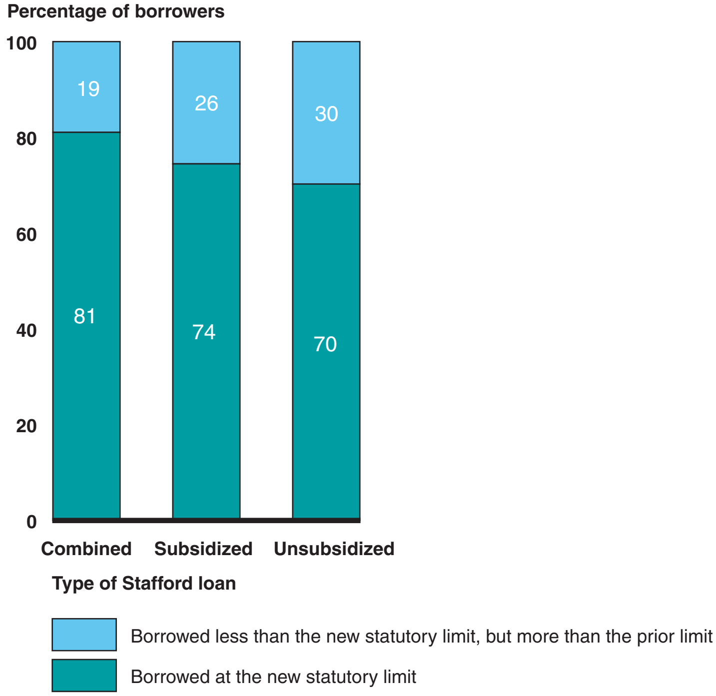
Students Borrowing above the Prior Loan Limits Generally Attended Public 4-Year Institutions, Enrolled in School Full-Time, and Were Dependent Students

A snapshot look at first- and second-year students in AY 2007-08 who borrowed at either (1) the new statutory limit or (2) less than the new limit (but more than they could have under the previous loan limits) showed that these two groups of borrowers shared similar key characteristics.[17] As shown in figure 5, for all loan types, students who borrowed at the new statutory limits accounted for the majority of those who borrowed more under the new loan limits.

[16]For more information about the AC Grant Program, see GAO, *Federal Student Aid: Recent Changes to Eligibility Requirements and Additional Efforts to Promote Awareness Could Increase Academic Competitiveness and SMART Grant Participation*, GAO-09-343 (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 25, 2009).

[17]For example, for dependent first-year students, those who borrowed less than the new limit specifically include students who borrowed above the previous loan limit of $2,625, but less than the new AY 2007-08 limit of $3,500.

Figure 5: First- and Second-Year Borrowers Who Received a Loan Amount Greater than Prior Limits in AY 2007-08, by Loan Type



Source: GAO analysis of NPSAS data.

These two groups of borrowers were similar in that they primarily attended college exclusively full-time and were dependent students.[18] Also, in general, these borrowers most commonly enrolled in public 4-year institutions and attended institutions located in the Southeast, Mid-East, and Great Lakes regions of the United States. Of note, in AY 2007-08, nearly 40 percent of all students were enrolled at public 4-year institutions; the majority of students attended institutions located in these three regions.

When we compared the two groups of borrowers who received more than the prior loan limit to all other first- and second-year Stafford loan borrowers, we found similarities across many characteristics, with the exception of dependency status and institutional sector (see table 3 for data on combined loans). For these categories, other first- and second-year borrowers were largely independent students and attended either public 2-year or for-profit institutions in greater percentages than the students who borrowed more under the new loan limits. Moreover, the relative sizes of these three borrowing populations varied widely by loan type. For combined and subsidized loans, the majority of students borrowed at the new statutory limit. In contrast, for unsubsidized loans, the majority borrowed an amount less than the prior loan limit. (See encl. I for data on subsidized and unsubsidized loans.)

[18]The AY 2007-08 increases in Stafford loan limits for undergraduates were only applicable to students in their first- and second-year. With the higher loan limits established in AY 2007-08, certain students were able to borrow amounts greater than the previous limits.

Table 3: For Combined Loans, Characteristics of First- and Second-Year Borrowers in AY 2007-08

	Percent of combined loan borrowers		
	Borrowed at the new loan limit	Borrowed less than new limit, but more than could have under prior limit	Borrowed less than the previous limit
Total population	**60**	**14**	**26**
Attendance status			
Exclusively full-time	73	76	52
Exclusively part-time	15	10	26
Mixed full-time and part-time	12[b]	14[b]	21
Dependency status			
Dependent	66	78	27
Independent	34	22	73
Race/ethnicity[a]			
White	62[b]	68	60[b]
Black/African American	21[b]	15	23[b]
Hispanic/Latino	11[b]	10[b]	9[b]
Institutional sector			
Public 4-year	34	43	17
Public 2-year	17	23[c]	39[c]
Nonprofit 4-year	23[b]	21[b,c]	9
For-profit 2- and 4-year	26	13	35[c]

Source: GAO analysis of NPSAS data.

[a]The column percentages for race/ethnicity do not total to 100 percent, since several categories were not included since they each accounted for 3 percent or less.

[b]For these data points, there is no statistical difference between the percentages as viewed across the columns.

[c]For these data points, there is no statistical difference between the percentages as viewed down the rows.

Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this letter to Education for review and comment. Education had no comments.

As agreed with your staffs, this letter satisfies the reporting requirement specified in the mandate. We are sending copies of this letter to the cognizant congressional committees and the Secretary of Education. This letter also will be available on the GAO Web site at http://www.gao.gov. Should you or your staffs have any questions, please contact me at (202) 512-7215 or Scottg@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. Key contributors to this report include Sherri Doughty, James Whitcomb, Kathryn O'Dea, and Daniel Ramsey. In addition, John Mingus assisted with data analysis and along with Patrick Dudley provided valuable methodological assistance; James Bennett provided graphics assistance; Susan Bernstein provided writing assistance; Alex Galuten and Sheila McCoy provided legal support; and Jonathan McMurray verified our findings.

George A. Scott
Director, Education, Workforce,
and Income Security

Enclosure (1)

List of Congressional Committees

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
The Honorable Michael B. Enzi
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate

The Honorable John P. Kline
Chairman
The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
House of Representatives

Enclosure I: Additional Data on the Student Enrollment as well as Characteristics of First- and Second-Year Borrowers in AY 2007-08

Table 4: Student Enrollment in Degree-granting Institutions of Higher Education by Sector and by Change in Share of Overall Enrollment between Academic Years 1999-2000 and 2009-10

Sector	2007-08	2008-09	2009-2010	1999-2000 percent share of enrollment	2009-10 percent share of enrollment
Public 4-year	5,812,810	5,951,734	6,284,176	38	36
Public 2-year	6,325,103	6,640,071	7,101,444	42	40
Nonprofit 4-year	2,479,693	2,507,250	2,566,597	17	15
For-profit 2- and 4-year	995,021	1,238,327	1,585,146	3	9

Source: GAO analysis of IPEDS data.

Table 5: Characteristics of First- and Second-Year Borrowers in AY 2007-08, for Subsidized Loans

	Percent of subsidized loan borrowers		
	Borrowed at the new loan limit	Borrowed less than new limit, but more than could have under prior limit	Borrowed less than the previous limit
Total population	**55**	**19**	**26**
Attendance status			
Exclusively full-time	71	67	59
Exclusively part-time	16[b]	19[b,c]	21[b,c]
Mixed full-time and part-time	13[b]	14[b,c]	20[c]
Dependency status			
Dependent	52	56	49[c]
Independent	48	44	51[c]
Race/ethnicity[a]			
White	57	62[b]	61[b]
Black/African American	23[b]	21[b]	22[b]
Hispanic/Latino	12[b]	10[b]	10[b]
Institutional sector			
Public 4-year	28	35	24
Public 2-year	16	27	33[c]
Nonprofit 4-year	22	18[c]	11
For-profit 2- and 4-year	34[b]	20[c]	32[b,c]

Source: GAO analysis of NPSAS data.

[a]The column percentages for race/ethnicity do not total to 100 percent, since several categories were not included since they each accounted for 3 percent or less.

[b]For these data points, there is no statistical difference between the percentages as viewed across the columns.

[c]For these data points, there is no statistical difference between the percentages as viewed down the rows.

Table 6: Characteristics of First- and Second-Year Borrowers in AY 2007-08, for Unsubsidized Loans

	Percent of unsubsidized loan borrowers		
	Borrowed at the new loan limit	Borrowed less than new limit, but more than could have under prior limit	Borrowed less than the previous limit
Total population	**25**	**11**	**64**
Attendance status			
Exclusively full-time	74	78	59
Exclusively part-time	16	9	24
Mixed full-time and part-time	10[b]	13[b]	17
Dependency status			
Dependent	80	92	21
Independent	20	8	79
Race/ethnicity[a]			
White	66[b]	66[b]	58
Black/African American	19[b]	18[b]	25
Hispanic/Latino	9[b]	10[b]	10[b]
Institutional sector			
Public 4-year	40[b]	42[b]	18
Public 2-year	17[b]	19[b,c]	24[b]
Nonprofit 4-year	22[b,c]	21[b,c]	11
For-profit 2- and 4-year	21[b,c]	18[b c]	48

Source: GAO analysis of NPSAS data.

[a]The column percentages for race/ethnicity do not total to 100 percent, since several categories were not included since they each accounted for 3 percent or less.

[b]For these data points, there is no statistical difference between the percentages as viewed across the columns.

[c]For these data points, there is no statistical difference between the percentages as viewed down the rows.

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