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**The contributions of Carl D. Perkins on higher education
legislation, 1948-1984**

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Middle Tennessee State University, 1990

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The Contributions of Carl D. Perkins
on Higher Education Legislation
1948-1984

Donald R. Damron

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate Faculty of Middle Tennessee State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Arts

May, 1990

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CARL D. PERKINS
TO HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATION
1948-1984

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ABSTRACT
THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CARL D. PERKINS
TO HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATION
1948-1984

by Donald R. Damron

Carl D. Perkins was the representative from the Seventh Congressional District of Kentucky. At the time of his death on August 3, 1984, he was among the top three in seniority in the House of Representatives having served as the representative from his district since 1948.

During those three decades of service Perkins became one of the most powerful voices in Congress for aid to education and relief for the millions of people who live in poverty.

Perkins served all of his term in Congress on the House Education and Labor Committee, succeeding Adam Clayton Powell in 1967 as chairman of that important body. From this powerful position Perkins found it possible to aid President Lyndon Johnson in his Great Society programs and also to act as a barrier to proposed funding cuts and program dismantling in the following administrations. Perkins was credited with a great impact upon programs which affected higher education legislation of 1958, 1965, and 1972. His importance was so widely recognized by his peers that the National Direct Student Loan Program was

Donald R. Damron

renamed the Perkins Loan in his honor.

It was the purpose of this dissertation to explore the contributions of Carl D. Perkins to legislative activities which directly impacted upon higher education. In order to accomplish this goal, chapter three of the dissertation provided a brief overview of the history of federal aid to higher education. Chapter four provided biographical information on the career of Carl D. Perkins. Chapter five was an examination of Perkins' legislative activity from 1948, and previous to his assuming the chairmanship of the House Committee on Education and Labor. Chapter six examined Perkins' years as chairman of the committee from 1967 until his death. Special emphasis was placed upon his adroit handling of the House/Senate Committee which produced the compromise Higher Education legislation of 1972 and his fight against budgetary cuts proposed under the Reagan Administration.

This dissertation concluded that Carl D. Perkins was a man totally dedicated to his goal of placing quality education at the postsecondary level within reach of every citizen who had the desire and ability to seize it. The contribution of Carl D. Perkins to higher education legislation was a very significant factor in the status of this arena of educational activity in this country today.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

For thirty-six years Carl D. Perkins from Hindman represented the Seventh Congressional District of Kentucky. During that period of almost four decades the United States increased its funding of higher education at a dramatic rate. The launching of Sputnik by the Soviet Union in the fall of 1957 created an intense push toward educational development in an attempt to make up ground perceived lost to the Russians in scientific development. During this push toward increased funding across the board, one of the primary figures involved was Carl Perkins. He was a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor from his early years in Washington and eventually replaced Adam Clayton Powell as Chairman of this very important committee in 1967. It was during his tenure as chairman of this committee that significant increases in funds were made available to all areas of educational activity in the country.

Perkins perhaps was most widely known for his work with elementary and secondary education, especially his efforts to protect the funds designated to help underprivileged youngsters with the school lunch and milk

programs, but he also made a significant contribution to funding for higher education. It was in this area that the author proposed to channel the research which formed the basis for this study.

Statement of the Problem

This paper was devoted to an examination of the contributions Congressman Carl D. Perkins had on legislation affecting higher education during his tenure as Chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor from 1967 until his death in 1984.

Significance of the Study

Over the past twenty-five years there have been at least eighteen dissertations that have explored the general field of federal aid to higher education. Of these eighteen scholarly works only one was devoted to chronicling the activity of a significant individual who worked to implement funding of higher education through legislative activity. In 1969 James Richard Davis researched the contribution of Senator Wayne Morse to federal aid to higher education as the basis of his doctoral dissertation at Michigan State University.

During this twenty-five year period federal involvement in higher education had mushroomed. Certainly there were many individuals who were important contributors to this increased governmental activity in postsecondary

education, but there were few who would hold more influence than the long time chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor, Carl D. Perkins (Democrat, Kentucky).

During the time span in which Perkins oversaw the activities of this committee, federal spending on higher education went through a period of boom and bust. During the administrations of Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter, a significant amount of financial aid was made available to students and colleges to assist them in their activities. During the Reagan Administration budget cuts created a retrenchment in this area. Perkins was on the cutting edge of both scenarios. His work was instrumental in gaining funding for higher education, and he was also active in holding the line against proposed budget cuts which would have eliminated or severely curtailed many of the resources available to students to help them in pursuit of a college education. This made the actions of this individual extremely significant to the university community as a whole.

With this in mind the question with which this paper proposed to deal was framed as follows: What was the contribution of Congressman Carl D. Perkins to the passage of legislation affecting higher education during his tenure as chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor from 1967 until his death in 1984?

There were also several subsidiary questions which were treated as well. These included the following:

1. Did Congressman Perkins have a consistent position on federal aid to higher education?
2. Where did higher education rank in Congressman Perkins' priorities and why?
3. Was his position on higher education clearly related to his position on other issues?
4. What effect did Congressman Perkins' background have on his views concerning higher education?

Preliminary research indicated that Perkins played a significant role in making funds available for higher education in this country. It appeared that his background in rural Appalachia was a significant factor in his lifelong devotion to the opportunities made available through a good education.

Definitions of Terms

Contribution: This term is used to refer to any action by Perkins which would lead to increased funding of higher education, preventing cutbacks in funds to postsecondary education, or to any positive activity taken by the Congressman to benefit this sector.

Higher Education: This would encompass all postsecondary education including vocational as well as college and university.

Tenure: Perkins was a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor beginning with his initial arrival in Washington in 1948. He served as Chairman of the Committee from 1967 until his death in 1984.

House Committee on Education and Labor: This is one of the more important of the twenty-two standing committees of the House of Representatives. Every bill introduced into the house which deals with education or labor must be referred to this committee. The committee and its relevant subcommittees have the power to amend the measure as they see fit, and to delay action or speed the bill on its way to a vote.

Chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor: The chairman of the committee exercised great control over the passage of the proposed legislation assigned to his committee until 1973. Until that date the chairman appointed all subcommittee chairmen and made decisions on when or whether specific bills would be considered. After 1973 a "spreading the action" movement took place in which some of the power of the chairman was taken away, especially in the appointing of subcommittee chairs. During the first six years of his tenure as Chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, Perkins was much more powerful than in those final years from 1973 until his death. Still, even with diminished powers, Perkins

remained extremely influential with his position as chairman and his strong base of seniority.

Limitations of the Study

The Carl Perkins papers are housed in the library at Eastern Kentucky University. Because of conditions under which these papers were donated to the library and to the current work being done in cataloguing and organizing the material, the sources will not be open to researchers until the year two thousand.

This placed a limitation on the material at the disposal of the researcher, but there was an abundance of sources available to begin the preliminary type of exploration into the topic which composed the scope of this paper.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Several secondary sources proved valuable in researching the general topic of federal aid to higher education. From the historical perspective John Brubacher's Bases for Policy in Higher Education, Alice Rivlin's The Role of the Federal Government in Financing Higher Education, Frederick Rudolph's The American College and University: A History, and Donald Tewksbury's The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War all provided information which proved beneficial in laying the foundation for the study.

The most valuable of the above mentioned authors for this work was Brubacher, who served on the President's Committee on Higher Education following World War II. His work was more complete and offered more material germane to the study.

Ronald Steel's Federal Aid to Education and Sam P. Wiggin's Higher Education in the South provided excellent bibliographies. Harry Williams also provided a rather impressive bibliography in his work on Planning for Effective Resource Allocation in Universities. This volume was commissioned by the American Council on Higher

Education and dealt primarily with finances and budget matters.

Other works which proved valuable included the Carnegie Commission report on The Capitol and the Campus and Institutional Aid: Federal Support to Colleges and Universities, Logan Wilson's volume on Emerging Patterns of Higher Education, and Frank C. Abbot's study of Government Policy and Higher Education.

Background and biographical information was available in a publication provided by the office of present Congressman Chris Perkins which contained all the memorial addresses delivered before Congress following the death of Carl Perkins. Lora Jane Glickman has written a brief biography of Congressman Perkins as a part of Ralph Nader's Congress Project, Citizens Look at Congress. This biography was published in 1972, and presented information on the Seventh Congressional District of Kentucky as well as on the background of the congressman himself.

A massive amount of related information was brought to light through use of the ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) facilities at the library of the University of Kentucky. There were over 650 sources listed. Sources were revealed dealing with the general topic of federal involvement with higher education. Obviously not all of these proved to be pertinent to the study at hand, but a brief overview of the abstracts which

accompanied the information indicated there were several which provided beneficial information.

Especially important were the several articles written by Congressman Perkins and published before his death in 1984 dealing with various issues relating to education. There were a number of published accounts by other authors concerning Perkins' work on higher education. Potentially valuable would be Jack Jennings' article from the Phi Delta Kappan (April 1985) entitled "Will Carl Perkins' Legacy Survive Ronald Reagan's Policies?"

The bulk of information for this dissertation was located in several important primary sources. One of these sources was the Congressional Record for the years 1967-1984. The Congressional Research Service provided a mass of information concerning the status of all bills that moved through the House Committee on Education and Labor. In response to a request made to present Congressman Chris Perkins, representatives from his office provided a computer generated digest of all the bills considered by the Committee on Education and Labor receiving the special attention of Carl D. Perkins.

Four major newspapers also provided a great deal of information for the paper. All articles concerning the work of Congressman Perkins from the Washington Post and the New York Times (providing the national perspective),

the Louisville Courier-Journal (providing a state perspective), and the Daily Independent from Ashland, Kentucky (providing the local perspective) were examined and pertinent information included in the dissertation.

Articles concerning the work of Congressman Perkins were found in such varied periodicals as U.S. News and World Report, Politics in America, The Almanac of American Politics, and The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Method and Procedure

Preparation to Present

June 1988

In June of 1988 in preparation for the writing of the proposal, research on the topic was begun. The Young Library at Kentucky Christian College was surveyed yielding biographical information on Congressman Perkins contained in Current Biography, Biographical Directory, Congressional Directory, and Who's Who in American Politics. The librarian at Kentucky Christian College arranged for the researcher to obtain a copy of the Memorial Addresses delivered on the floor of Congress in memory of Congressman Perkins which was used as a reference point in biographical data and in providing information concerning key legislative acts. Also during the month of June, the library at Ashland Community College was surveyed yielding several important

periodical articles as well as microfilm access to back volumes of important newspapers.

July 1988

In July of 1988 several valuable contacts were established including a conference with Daily Independent newswriter George Wolfford who provided much personal information on Mr. Perkins and also made possible a number of future contacts for source material. Mr. Wolfford also provided photostatic copies of several important articles as well as a biographical booklet on Mr. Perkins and an index to the Daily Independent of Ashland, Kentucky. The Louisville Public Library was also contacted from which was obtained an index to the Louisville Courier-Journal to facilitate research in that area. From the library at Morehead State University an index was obtained for a survey of the New York Times. Contacts were made with Lees Junior College and Alice Lloyd College where Congressman Perkins received portions of his higher education. Contacts were also made with library personnel at Morehead State University, but unfortunately these contacts yielded no useful information.

August 1988

In August of 1988 Ruth Pierce of the Frankfort Public Library was contacted but could produce only a few

clippings which provided little of value. The library at Morehead was visited again in order to attempt to locate some of Mr. Perkins' papers which were supposed to be in the archives. These could not be located. At the Boyd County, Kentucky, public library a complete set of the Daily Independent was located along with a printer/reader, and work was begun searching through the back issues. The library at the University of Kentucky provided a complete index of the Congressional Record.

September 1988

In September of 1988 a telephone interview was conducted with Mrs. Carl D. Perkins who provided contact points with individuals who had served her husband during his terms in office. Mr. David Whalen sent a number of articles from the Library of Congress, and Mr. Omar Waddles responded with a vast amount of material from the Congressional Research Service.

November 1988

In November of 1988 more information was received from Congressman Chris Perkins' office including a computer printout which provided a digest of all bills considered during Congressman Perkins' tenure as Chairman of the Education and Labor Committee.

January and February 1989

January and February of 1989 were spent in research of the Louisville Courier-Journal, and more material was received from Mr. Waddles in Congressman Perkins' office.

March 1989

In March of 1989 the Young Library of Kentucky Christian College was surveyed for books providing a broad viewpoint of federal involvement with higher education. These books were scanned and pertinent information was noted.

April 1989

In April of 1989 Mr. Dave Whalen was contacted again. Mr. Whalen suggested contact with a Mr. Jack Jennings who had served under Congressman Perkins as the counselor for the Committee on Education and Labor. Mr. Jennings arranged for a copy of A Compilation of Federal Education Laws: Volume III, Higher Education to be obtained by the researcher.

Librarian Mary Vass at the University of Kentucky provided the researcher with a bibliography through the ERIC system consisting of over 650 entries.

May 1989

In May of 1989 Librarian Bill Malone at Morehead State University performed a Data Base search to find dissertation abstracts on the subject of federal aid to higher education. These abstracts were found and copied.

Procedure

Following approval of the proposal by the Department of History of the Middle Tennessee State University, work began in earnest on the writing of the dissertation. An interview was granted by Mrs. Carl Perkins and an attempt was made to schedule one with Congressman Chris Perkins. The researcher continued to go through the mass of material received from Washington and explored new leads which materialized.

CHAPTER 3

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL AID TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education in the United States has not always experienced the benefit of financial support from the federal government. The early institutions of higher education were established to train an educated clergy. The Protestant Reformation generated a number of denominations whose emphasis upon the interpretation of the Bible created a need for men of learning to be able to interpret and share the message of God with the members of the flock. Of the first nine colleges established in the colonies only the University of Pennsylvania (first known as the Academy) was not dedicated to the preparation of a trained clergy. While it was true that many of the graduates of these institutions chose to enter other professions, it was equally true the main emphasis of the education provided in these colonial colleges was the training of the clergy.

The shock waves of the Enlightenment served to dilute the clerical concentration of these colleges until eventually they placed their major emphasis upon training for the professions as opposed to preparation for the ministry. There were occasional resurgences of emphasis on Biblical and ministerial education as during the

Second Great Awakening. Primarily, however, the education of ministers was abandoned by those early colleges only to be resurrected by a new order of institutions of higher education established by various denominations for the purpose of providing preachers for the congregations of their particular persuasion.

It was not until 1785 that the federal government chose to involve itself in an active way in the funding of American education. During the period of the Confederation, the Land Ordinance of 1785 made provision for the surveying and sale of the huge area of land called the Northwest Territory. The Northwest Territory had been added to the country as a result of the Treaty of Paris in 1783 which had brought an end to the Revolutionary War. Under the terms of the legislation the land was to be surveyed into townships six miles square. Every township was to be divided into thirty-six sections. These sections were to be sold at auction for no less than \$1.00 per acre (a total of \$640 per section). The proceeds from the sale of every sixteenth section were to be reserved for the funding of education. This action eventually produced what became the first federal grant for higher education. An ordinance of July 23, 1787, authorized the sale of land to the Ohio Company and set aside one square mile in each township for public schools, one for religion, and two townships of good land

near the center of the purchase "for the support of a literary institution to be applied to the intended object of the legislature of the state." The result of this action eventually provided an endowment for Ohio University at Athens, Ohio.¹

From that landmark piece of legislation the involvement of the federal government in educational aid had grown dramatically. From funds received from the sale of western lands which initially were reserved for elementary and secondary educational objectives, the government had since advanced to pouring millions of dollars in direct aid into postsecondary education including colleges, universities, as well as vocational training.

The reasons for this emerging participation of the federal government in higher education came about with the realization that universities and colleges deal with the most precious resources a nation can possess-- talented teacher-scholars and the potential leadership of future decades.²

¹Alice M. Rivlin, The Role of the Federal Government in Financing Higher Education (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1961), 11.

²Harry Williams, Planning for Effective Resource Allocation in Universities (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1966), iii.

This commitment by the federal government to higher education did not take place overnight. It developed through years of evolution which have briefly been examined in the content of this chapter.

The first documented assistance provided to higher education in America took place in 1636 when the Massachusetts Bay Colony authorized the establishment of a college for the purpose of providing an educated clergy. Harvard (named for a young clergyman named John Harvard) was founded to fulfill that purpose. The Puritans dreaded "to leave an illiterate ministry to the church when our present ministers shall lie in the dust."³ Two other colonial colleges were strongly tied to the support received from their respective governments. According to Frederick Rudolph both William and Mary and Yale were also state funded. Other colleges that were inspired by the Great Awakening might have occasionally sought and accepted favors from the state, but nothing approaching the aid that flowed into Cambridge, Williamsburg, and New Haven.⁴ The College of William and Mary was established in 1693 to serve James Blair's purpose of strengthening the Anglican ministry. Yale

³George B. Tindall, America: A Narrative History, vol. I, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1988), 136.

⁴Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University: A History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 13-16.

College soon followed in 1701, and was set up to serve the Puritans of Connecticut who felt that Harvard was drifting from strict orthodoxy. These institutions were closely followed by the Presbyterian College of New Jersey (later to become Princeton University) which was founded in 1746 as successor to William Tennent's Log College. In close succession came King's College in New York (later Columbia University) in 1754; the College of Rhode Island (later Brown University) in 1764; Queen's College (later Rutgers) in 1766; and Dartmouth, the outgrowth of an earlier school for Indians, in 1769. Among the colonial colleges only the University of Pennsylvania, founded as the Philadelphia Academy in 1754, arose from a secular impulse.⁵ By 1770 there were nine institutions of higher education in the American colonies.

In 1819 the federal government came to the aid of higher education and in so doing continued to strengthen its own position of power in relation to the states. The New Hampshire legislature was irritated by the Federalist dominated Board of Trustees of Dartmouth College. The board was a self-perpetuating body established under the provisions of the original charter granted by George III in 1769. The legislature attempted to alter the charter

⁵Tindall, 136.

by placing control of the college under a new board appointed by a governor. The original trustees sued and, with Daniel Webster as their counsel, eventually gained a hearing before the Supreme Court. Chief Justice John Marshall, speaking for the court, declared the charter to be a valid contract which the legislature had violated, an act expressly forbidden by the Constitution. This decision, in addition to limiting the power of the states over private corporations, gave the federal government an important foothold in its concern for higher education.⁶

An early debate which had a definite effect on the future of government involvement in higher education centered around the controversy concerning what segment of the general public would be entitled to receive its benefits. Thomas Jefferson argued for a limitation to those few who had proven their ability and had been separated from the masses like wheat from the chaff. Traditionally higher education not only had been the privilege of the few, but of right ought to be.⁷ Jefferson proposed to implement this theory through a

⁶George B. Tindall and David Shi, America, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1989), 242.

⁷Abraham Flexner, Universities, English, German, American (Fair Lawn, NJ: Oxford University Press, 1930), 338; cited by John S. Brubacher, Bases for Policy in Higher Education (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 3.

progressive screening of students from the elementary through the intermediate to the higher schools, hoping thus that the talented would get culled or "raked from the rubbish" of the lower schools.⁸

It should be pointed out that in Jefferson's mind the elite was one of brains and not social status. This theory dominated early American attitudes toward higher education even though there were many times when socioeconomic status did prove to hinder its actual realization.

As a result of the equalitarianism spawned during the Jacksonian era, Jefferson's idea of higher education for the few was seriously challenged. The basic philosophy springing from this idea was the equality of opportunity. All had a chance to advance as far as they could go. Both the mediocre and the talented had the chance to prove just exactly what they could do.

This philosophy of equalitarianism formed the basis upon which a tremendously significant piece of legislation was passed in 1862. This was the Morrill Act.

Justin S. Morrill was a representative (later a senator) from Vermont. It was his contention the curriculum in most colleges was geared too exclusively to a narrow, classical presentation which did little to meet

⁸Brubacher, 4.

the needs of students who desired to pursue careers in agriculture or engineering; an idea not limited to Morrill himself by any means. During the first half of the nineteenth century a number of private technical schools were founded which were not associated with any of the established colleges. Most of these efforts were not well financed and folded soon after their founding. They did manage to gain the attention of influential leaders in various states who began to seek state support in establishing similar schools. By far the most important was Michigan Agricultural College in East Lansing (now Michigan State University) which was founded in 1855 and served as a model for many of the land grant colleges which later emerged as a result of the Morrill Act.⁹ The first Morrill Act specified only that the land grant colleges should teach agriculture, the mechanic arts, and military tactics and should not exclude "other scientific and classical studies."¹⁰

Morrill faced significant opposition to the passage of his bill from western congressmen who were reluctant to let the eastern states participate in the distribution of land within their borders, and fearful that the land would be brought up by speculators in large

⁹Rivlin, 15.

¹⁰Ibid., 123.

blocks and withheld from actual settlers. They were joined by states' rights congressmen from the South who argued that federal aid to education in any form was both unconstitutional and undesirable.¹¹

Those who supported Morrill's efforts came from several sources. There were groups genuinely interested in agricultural education, especially among those already existing colleges who were eager for federal assistance. The provision concerning public lands was what made the bill favorable to the states of the Northeast. They had no public lands, and therefore were eager to establish the point that they had a right to share in the public domain. The fact that Morrill's bill not only promised them a share of the public lands but also proposed distribution of those lands on a basis of population was a big selling point with those older states.¹²

The Civil War saw the southern states pulling out of the Union and along with their departure went a significant block of votes against the Morrill Act. Even though the western states were still opposed, the bill passed both houses and was signed into law by President Lincoln in 1862.

¹¹Ibid., 17.

¹²Ibid., 16.

The Morrill Act, while continuing the established policy of the federal government in granting land to the states in support of higher education, was different from other precedents in several respects. This difference was desperately needed simply because the states in times past had acted with very little accountability in their use of funds generated from the sale of public lands granted by the federal government. In many instances the interests of prospective buyers or tenants were given far more weight in regard to decisions than to safeguarding the university endowments.¹³ All the states, even those with no public lands, shared in the bounty. Each state received thirty thousand acres (or the equivalent in land scrip) for each senator and representative to which it was entitled. Another point which differed from previous laws was a stipulation concerning the type of education to be provided with funds received from the sale of these lands. The colleges receiving revenue from the Morrill Act were not prohibited from teaching classical studies but were to specifically focus on agriculture and the mechanical arts. Along with these specified topics the schools were encouraged to include military tactics which reflected

¹³Ibid., 12.

the frustration of so many Union military defeats in the opening months of the Civil War.¹⁴

One of the most significant results of the Morrill Act was to provide the foundation for future joint financing of educational objectives and make possible the development of the "matching" funds' provisions of later federal legislation. The state had to agree, under the provisions of the act, to have an agricultural and mechanical college in existence within five years; it had to dispose of the land or scrip and safeguard the proceeds as a perpetual endowment from which the college was to receive an income of not less than 5 percent; and it had to make an annual report to Washington. The states also accepted an obligation to put their own money into providing buildings and physical plants since these items were not included in the uses for which Morrill Act money could be used.¹⁵

The breakdown in the old classical idea of curriculum produced colleges and universities offering a quality education designed to meet the needs of the common man and not just the professional class. Cornell University, which began as a direct result of the Morrill Act, purported to be an institution where anyone could

¹⁴Ibid., 14.

¹⁵Ibid.

learn anything, and Minnesota later proclaimed there was nothing intellectual too undignified to teach.¹⁶

As the federal government became more inclined to distribute resources to higher educational institutions, there developed a scramble among old line colleges to share in the wealth. It soon became clear the states were not interested in subsidizing these older institutions and were going to focus their efforts on increased support of the newer colleges. By 1872 when Congress was debating an increase in federal endowments to the land-grant colleges, the old line schools had already declared themselves in opposition. They argued for a laissez-faire philosophy on federal aid and strongly advocated a principle praising the independent, self-reliant, private college.¹⁷ This created a rather shabby episode in American academic history as the old line colleges lashed out at those they felt had prostituted themselves and the curriculum in exchange for the right to feed at the federal trough.

In 1887 Congress ushered in a new method for support to higher education. The Hatch Act was passed which established an agricultural experiment station in each state to undertake and report publicly on scientific experiments of importance to agriculture. These stations

¹⁶Brubacher, 9.

¹⁷Rudolph, 254.

were located in the land-grant colleges and much of their work was directed to faculty members.¹⁸ Under the Hatch Act each state received an annual grant of \$15,000 toward the support of an agricultural experiment station at its land-grant college. The program was placed under the supervision of the United States Commissioner of Agriculture, and experiment stations were required to make an annual report to him.¹⁹

As has been noted, federal support of higher education had been basically confined to granting public land to the states to support these institutions. There were some exceptions with the most significant being that of the military academies, but for the most part this was the exception rather than the rule.

In 1890 this would change as Congress enacted into law the second Morrill Act. This legislation provided for annual payments to the states for the support of the land grant colleges. The money was to be used for instruction in "agriculture, the mechanic arts, the English language, and economic science, with special reference to their application in the industries of life."²⁰ These subsidies provided considerable help to the land grant colleges when

¹⁸Rivlin, 21.

¹⁹Ibid., 25.

²⁰Ibid., 20.

first given, but their importance in future years stemmed mainly from their continued existence as opposed to the amount of funds provided.

The Second Morrill Act was also important because of its inclusion of a stipulation tying receipt of federal funds to race unless they also set up separate but equal facilities.²¹

In 1906 the Adams Act increased the federal contribution to the experiment stations established under the Hatch Act. Stations were required to secure prior approval of specific research projects for which they desired to use federal funds. Later legislation increased the size of grants and broadened the scope of their activities. The importance of this type of funding was the increasing tendency of the government to finance specific projects in the experiment stations, rather than giving general support to a research organization. This precedent was to establish the norm in federal participation in university research in all fields.²²

In 1914 the Smith-Lever Act brought all the various programs growing out of the project funding into a single cooperative venture. The Department of Agriculture abandoned its independent extension program

²¹Rudolph, 254.

²²Rivlin, 25.

and offered to work through the land grant colleges. It was as a part of this legislation that Congress stipulated the states which accepted the federal funds should put up an equal amount of money. This was the first federal law to contain a formal "matching" provision.²³

During the years following the Adams Act and Smith-Lever Act the government became increasingly more involved in aid to higher education in the form of funds given for specific types of research projects and programs. Medical research received a high priority, especially with the establishment of the National Cancer Institute in 1937 which provided federal money for research pertaining to a study of this disease by many university-connected scientists. The military even became involved following World War I by establishing ROTC programs in many colleges. Student Army Training Corps units were established at a large number of colleges in the academic year 1917-18, but the war was over before the program got into full operation.²⁴ There has been much discussion of this partnership between the university and the military. Some argued that it fulfilled the standards as stated by the first Morrill Act while others

²³Ibid., 21.

²⁴Ibid., 111.

contended the armed services did not reimburse the colleges enough for the use of their facilities in the providing of training for future members of the military.²⁵ Regardless of the position taken on this issue the funds that flowed into the university and the students themselves were federal dollars.

The Great Depression ushered in a new emphasis on federal funding. Except for a few situations such as the ROTC program, most federal funds were provided either to the states to distribute to the colleges or to schools or to professors within the college as grants for research projects. The period of the 1930s saw the origin of federal aid to help individual students. The Depression was forcing hundreds of young people out of college which only served to swell the ranks of the unemployed already numbering almost one-third of the nation's work force.

The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (later replaced in the area of student aid by the National Youth Administration) set up a college work program designed to help some selected young people continue their education while earning money in useful part-time jobs on campus. Each institution was told how many students it could employ. The payments went directly to the students, but the institution was responsible for selecting which

²⁵Ronald Steel, ed., Federal Aid to Education (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1961), 159.

students would participate, finding jobs for them to do, and forwarding records to the National Youth Administration.²⁶

The Depression years also saw the origin of presidential advisory groups dealing with higher education. President Hoover's National Advisory Committee on Education, established in 1931, was the first among many such groups with practically all of them pointing out the need and desirability of resolving the inconsistent and frequently conflicting policies of federal agencies in their interactions with the higher education community. Their recommendations were not received with any enthusiasm by the higher education community. The educators felt the disorganized system providing the funds might be the lesser of two evils when compared to what might happen to funds if politics and crisis management might be allowed to control the purse strings.²⁷

World War II played a significant role in federal funding to higher education. Millions of dollars were made available for various research projects to help in the military effort. War loans were made in scientific fields, especially those where manpower was limited. But

²⁶Rivlin, 63.

²⁷John T. Wilson, Academic Science, Higher Education, and the Federal Government: 1950-1983 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 44.

the single most dramatic change that developed out of the war was the increased involvement of the government in providing aid to students. The precedent had been established with the student work program of the Depression years, but it was brought to new heights by the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944--the "G.I. Bill of Rights" (G.I. refers to government issue).

The G.I. Bill was an entirely different approach to the handling of veterans legislation. Always before, veterans had received their benefits in cash bonuses, land, and medical services or pensions. After World War I there had been some movement toward retraining those who had been wounded to help them find some productive career, but nothing had been done for those fortunate enough to escape injury.

As World War II came to a close, it was determined to provide any G.I. who desired it the opportunity to return to college at government expense. The original purpose of the G.I. program was to compensate veterans whose education had been delayed or interrupted by the war. Initially the law provided vocational rehabilitation and training for disabled veterans of World War II but was then enlarged to include similar benefits to those who served in Korea during the Korean Conflict (1950-53). Later legislation amended the G.I. Bill to provide educational and training allowances for all World War II

veterans for periods up to forty-eight months, depending on variables such as length of service and whether or not the veteran had been stationed overseas. This too was later amended to extend similar benefits to Korean veterans for periods up to thirty-six months.²⁸

Provision was made for the education of children of men killed in combat or in extra-hazardous peace-time service. Eligibility for these benefits depended exclusively on military service--not on aptitude for education. As Rivlin states,

Thus the educational benefits of the G.I. Bill were the twentieth century equivalent of the 'forty acres and a mule.' They gave the returning servicemen not a cash bonus, but some intangible capital, which, if he had the ability and the inclination to use it, could increase his future earning capacity.²⁹

A problem developed in the administration of the funds set aside under the G.I. Bill which caused alterations to be made in the manner in which the money was distributed. Initially the veteran received a small subsistence payment for personal expenses, and the rest of the allotment was paid to the college in the form of tuition and other fees. This procedure was very cumbersome and difficult to manage. Some felt that many institutions were raising their tuition fees in order to profit from the program. As a result when the G.I. Bill

²⁸Rivlin, 65.

²⁹Ibid., 67.

was extended in 1952 to apply to Korean War veterans as well, all payments to institutions were dropped and the funds were paid directly to the veteran who in turn was responsible for payment of all his school expenses.³⁰

The effect of the G.I. Bill on college enrollment was staggering. Rivlin reports that 2.2 million veterans of World War II and 1.166 million veterans of the Korean Conflict took advantage of the program and returned to college or enrolled for the first time.³¹ Records indicate these veterans often performed better than non-veteran students. Certainly their impact created significant problems for the campuses around the country. Overcrowded conditions were common, and there was a shortage of qualified instructors and classroom facilities. The government attempted to help in this regard by giving or selling to the institutions at greatly reduced prices prefabricated buildings and other equipment which were used to help ease the pressure created by the influx of veterans.

The post-war years saw the development of a great deal more interest on the part of the federal government in education in general and higher education in particular. One area especially emphasized was the

³⁰Ibid., 68.

³¹Ibid., 67.

appointing of blue-ribbon commissions to study the problems of higher education and to make recommendations based on their findings.

One of the first of these was the Commission on Higher Education called into existence under the administration of President Truman. The Commission was headed by George Frederick Zook, a respected educator who had taught history at Cornell University and served as president of the American Council on Education, a position which he held from 1934 until 1950.³² After extensive work the Commission delivered a report which deplored the waste of human potential incurred when students dropped out of college for financial reasons. The Commission encouraged the state, local, and federal governments to provide free education through the first two years of college for all who chose to attend. They suggested funds be made available through various grants to reduce costs in the final years of a student's college career, and that a federal scholarship program be developed to prevent capable students from dropping out because of financial problems. The Zook Commission also called for federal funds to establish fellowships for

³²Anna Rothe, ed., Current Biography 1951 (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1952), 675.

students who chose to pursue education at the graduate level.

The Zook Report created a great deal of discussion and controversy but very little change. There were a few expansions of existing programs but no general program of federal scholarships or fellowships was adopted.³³ The failure of the government to act upon the Zook Report in general did not mean there were not strides made in the field of fellowships in higher education. It simply was left to individual agencies within the government to move into this area with their own resources. An example of this was the fellowships established in the late 1940s and the early 1950s by the Atomic Energy Commission and the National Science Foundation. Both provided funds for students involved in studies and research in various fields of medical and biological science.³⁴

Ten years later President Eisenhower appointed another distinguished committee to examine the state of education beyond the high school. The committee, headed by Devereux C. Josephs, the respected president of the New York Life Insurance Company and the Carnegie Corporation, returned with many of the same conclusions

³³Rivlin, 71.

³⁴Steel, 60.

as the Zook Committee a decade earlier.³⁵ The Josephs Committee deplored the potential waste in human resources taking place because talented students were forced to abandon their educational pursuits because of limited funds. The significant difference in the reports concerned how these problems were to be solved. The Josephs Committee suggested methods much different from those of Zook.

The Josephs Committee placed more emphasis upon improving the guidance in secondary systems and making funds available to students through loans. Any federal involvement in funding of higher education also included cost-of-education grants to the institutions as well as stipends to the students since tuition rarely covered the overall cost of education. The Josephs Committee also suggested income tax credits or breaks for those who pursued higher education.

The only immediate federal action recommended by the Committee was an "experimental" work-study program, under which twenty-five to fifty thousand college students received government compensation for work performed at the institutions they were attending.³⁶

³⁵Marjorie C. Candee, ed., Current Biography 1953 (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1954), 298-99.

³⁶Rivlin, 72.

All of these findings by the blue-ribbon commissions would probably have accomplished little other than creating debate material had not the news been broadcast to America in October of 1957 that Russia had launched Sputnik. The effect on the nation was dramatic. This scientific accomplishment by the Russian nation was viewed as a direct challenge to the traditional feeling of America being the most advanced nation in science and technology. Suddenly issues which were of little significance assumed the role of burning importance. High on this list was the issue of education. Americans perceived the problem as being one of an inferior education, especially in the fields of mathematics and science. Following the launch of Sputnik literally dozens of bills were introduced in Congress calling for federal programs to strengthen American education, particularly scientific education, in the service of national defense.³⁷

Within the Congress reaction was put into action with the creation of the Subcommittee on Education within the House Education and Labor Committee (Carl D. Perkins was a member of this initial subcommittee). President Eisenhower responded with recommendations for an expanded National Science Foundation and for a number of new

³⁷Ibid., 73.

education programs which eventually were authorized by Congress in the National Defense Education Act (NDEA).³⁸

The congressional passage of the NDEA brought landmark legislation into existence. This act had three very important features. First, was the fact the principal benefits were directed towards students rather than institutions. It was the first time the federal government had ever clearly committed itself to the idea that "no student of ability will be denied the opportunity for higher education because of financial need." The second feature was the method for distribution of the funds. Instead of following the traditional pattern of setting funds and fellowships apart for a few elite organizations, the resources under the NDEA were far more populist in nature. The third factor concerned a loyalty oath and an affidavit disclaiming membership or belief in the aims of subversive organizations. Pressure brought on by various civil rights groups and educational associations, especially within the higher education community, led eventually to an amendment to the law which dropped the affidavit but retained the oath. The amendment also clarified the law

³⁸Wilson, 45.

by making it a crime for an individual belonging to a subversive group to receive funds under NDEA programs.³⁹

There would be many individuals and groups who used the oath and affidavit of the NDEA to argue that it was impossible to enjoy the benefits of government participation without having to pay the price of having it exert an influence which would tend to create problems of academic freedom. Certainly this problem was one that merited thought and discussion, but it was also proven that the American system had enough flexibility and vitality to either prevent or gain recourse from these problems.⁴⁰

Another direct result of the educational emphasis growing out of Sputnik was the National Defense Student Loan Program (NDSL). Funds were set aside to be matched with money provided by the institutions to make low interest loans to needy undergraduate and graduate students. The federal government contributed 90 percent of the capital while the institution provided the other 10 percent. Funds were allocated to the states based on the enrollment in higher education within the state and then distributed to the various schools in proportion to their requests for these funds. To keep the funds

³⁹Ibid., 46-47.

⁴⁰Ibid., 47.

distributed among as many institutions as possible a \$250,000 ceiling was established on money available to any one institution. A student could borrow as long as he was a full-time student. A student was permitted to borrow \$1,000 a year and no more than \$5,000 total. The loans bore interest at 3 percent beginning one year after graduation. Payments were suspended if the student returned to college or was a member of the armed forces. If the student chose to enter teaching as a profession, part of the repayment was cancelled. This provision dovetailed with the section of the act that stipulated special consideration for receiving these loans would be made for those who desired to enter teaching as a profession and for those with special aptitude in the sciences, mathematics, or foreign languages.⁴¹

Another topic treated in the outgrowth of the National Defense Acts was that of graduate fellowships. As this legislation was planned, there were two objectives toward which it was directed. The first was to increase the supply of trained college and university teachers; and the second was to promote a wider geographical distribution of facilities for graduate study.⁴² When requests for participating in federal

⁴¹Rivlin, 76.

⁴²Ibid., 78.

funding were received, those tendered by institutions providing new and expanded programs of study were to be given special consideration. In addition an applicant was given preference if he expressed an interest in entering the teaching profession at the college or university level.⁴³

In addition to those fellowships provided to graduate students enrolled in education, other fellowship opportunities developed as well. In the year 1959-60 funds were made available under the NDEA for graduate students desiring to major in the study of modern foreign languages. The students had to give reasonable assurance they would be available following graduation to teach these languages or to perform other public service which enabled them to put their schooling to some practical benefit. Other fellowships, following the precedent established in 1938 with the National Cancer Institute of Health, were offered under the umbrella of the National Institute of Health (NIH). These fellowships were extended to students involved in either pre-doctoral or post-doctoral work and were available on both a full-time or part-time basis, depending upon the research in which they were engaged. One interesting variant of the grants provided by the NIH was the fact they would be used to

⁴³Ibid., 79.

support the teaching programs of the health sciences as well as the students who benefited from them. Traditionally funds set aside for colleges and universities by the government had been paid directly to students or had involved buildings or research, but not operating expenses.⁴⁴

The NDEA was very successful in its involving of the federal government with higher education. As a result of this success Congress voted in 1961 to extend the provisions of this legislation for two more years. This extension served to provide a significant amount of federal aid for students of higher education during that time period. However, the wave of intense devotion to higher education funding seemed to rest in the year 1961. Even though the NDEA was extended, and there would certainly be more funds made available in the future, higher education funding took its first real setback since Sputnik thrust it onto the national scene in 1957. President John F. Kennedy sent a special message to Congress in which he called for pursuit of twin goals, "a new standard of excellence in education--and the availability of such excellence to all who are willing and able to pursue it."⁴⁵ The Eighty-seventh Congress was

⁴⁴Ibid., 87-88.

⁴⁵Wilson, 48.

presented a bill which called for grants for construction of facilities in science, engineering, and libraries; student loans with a portion of the loan being "nonreimbursable"; and grants to states for the construction of community colleges, limited to science, engineering, and libraries. When the Congress heard the reading of the bill, floor action returned the bill to committee with instructions to strike the student loan program. As a result the bill died in committee.⁴⁶

This defeat reflected the attitude expressed in the Carnegie Report to the American Council on Higher Education. Writing in Higher Education in the South, Sam Wiggins pointed out, "In the past, we Americans have tended to respond to educational needs in relation to crises--Sputnik, for example--rather than out of positive and forward-looking philosophies."⁴⁷ This crises-oriented philosophy caused federal involvement in higher education to advance in spurts rather than a steady goal-oriented growth which led to more practical and functional objectives.

In 1963 another attempt was made to advance federal funding for education. An omnibus education bill was sent to Congress which, in its higher education

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Sam P. Wiggins, Higher Education in the South (Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing, 1966), 207.

components, provided for federal assistance for facility construction, an expanded NDEA loan and fellowship effort, student aid in the form of insured loans, work-study, and scholarships for both talented and needy students, and assistance for college libraries.⁴⁸ The eventual legislation resulting from this action became known as the Higher Education Facilities Act. It largely ignored most of the areas for which funding had been requested and focused instead on providing matching grants and loans for the construction of academic facilities.⁴⁹

Most educators refer to years of the Johnson Administration as the "golden age" for higher education. At no time before and at no time since has education been so high on the national agenda of any administration.⁵⁰ Carl Perkins, the subject of this paper, was extremely active during this period. In fact, there were several of his co-workers and peers who considered his work in the passage of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to be some of the finest legislative work during the four decades he was in Congress. "Carl and President Johnson

⁴⁸Wilson, 48.

⁴⁹Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, Institutional Aid: Federal Support to Colleges and Universities (New York: Carnegie Foundation, 1972), 10.

⁵⁰Wilson, 49.

were alike in their thinking" was a statement made by Mrs. Verna Perkins in an interview in August of 1989. "They both believed in the importance of education and in making educational opportunities available to anyone who displayed a desire to move in that direction, regardless of their place in the socio-economic system."⁵¹ Certainly this similarity in thinking coupled with a sincere devotion to education led the Johnson Administration to "put education at the head of our work agenda"⁵² and inspired Carl Perkins to work tirelessly toward achieving that goal.

Previous to the passage of the Higher Education Act of 1965 the federal government had rendered aid in some respect with the 1964 Poverty Program. Social Security beneficiaries were allowed to continue to receive their benefits until age twenty-two if they were enrolled in higher education. The G.I. Bill provided for a monthly allowance for forty-five months if schooling were undertaken within ten years of discharge. (This was later amended in 1977 to state a recipient had to contribute to a fund for twelve months which allowed him to receive two-to-one matching funds from the Veteran's Administration.) College Work-Study assistance initiated

⁵¹Mrs. Carl Perkins, interview by author, Hindman, Kentucky, 16 August 1989.

⁵²Wilson, 49.

by the Economic Opportunity Act gave part-time employment to students enrolled at least half-time with the government paying up to 80 percent of the student's salary, the employer 20 percent.⁵³

All of this "back door" attention to higher education funding was valuable and constructive, but it was the Higher Education Act of 1965 that marked "the coming of age of education policy as an aspect of national social policy."⁵⁴ This important legislation added new programs of aid to students as well as financial assistance for a number of specifically designated college-based programs.⁵⁵ Along with programs for community assistance, college library aid, support for "developing" institutions, and the National Teacher Corps, the Higher Education Act of 1965 included two new forms of student aid. The first entitled Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants (SEOG). These funds provided need-based scholarships to undergraduate students. These scholarships were awarded to the student by the institution which applied each year to the federal government for the funds. The second innovation was Guaranteed Student Loans (GSL) for which the principal

⁵³Ibid., 60.

⁵⁴Ibid., 50.

⁵⁵Carnegie Commission, 10.

was to come from the private sector and be insured by the government.⁵⁶

The chaos of the latter years of the Johnson Administration saw a backlash against the higher education community. The campus disorders and riots stimulated hearings in both houses of Congress and eventually resulted in the Higher Education Amendments Act of 1968 which formed the prototype for similar laws later on. Basically this legislation called for the cutting off of federal funds for students and faculty convicted of crimes connected with disruptive campus activities.⁵⁷

With the inauguration of President Nixon, federal government initiative affecting higher education was no longer dominated by the White House. But because existing amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965 did not expire until 1971, there was no great pressure on Congress. President Nixon indicated his views on higher education policies and programs early in 1970. On January 26, 1970, he appeared on nationwide television to veto the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare appropriation bill, insisting the money was only going to be spent for existing programs without making what he

⁵⁶Wilson, 61.

⁵⁷Ibid., 51.

considered to be urgent reforms. President Nixon's first message dealing solely with higher education called for a shift in spending to emphasize the needs of poor students and to propose the establishment of a National Foundation for Higher Education. The President later called for the establishment of a National Institute of Education for further research and development in education. Most of his requests received little support in either Congress or the higher education community, but the National Institute of Education did receive congressional approval in 1972.⁵⁸

Perhaps the most important occurrence affecting higher education during the Nixon years was the fact that the power base for shaping higher education policies had moved from the executive to the legislative branch.⁵⁹

In the early years of the decade of the 1970s the main issue concerning federal aid to higher education seemed to focus on how federal money should be made available to the various educational institutions. Congressman Albert H. Quie (Republican, Minnesota) introduced legislation in 1970 to provide grants to colleges and universities to be determined by formula and administered by the Office of Education. Congress

⁵⁸Ibid., 56-57.

⁵⁹Ibid., 57.

refused to pass such legislation and opted for expanding the commitment to student aid. By 1978 the federal government's support of higher education had grown in terms of dollars but the dispersal of these funds was overwhelmingly (by five-sixths of the increase) in the form of support for students rather than support for programs or for institutions.⁶⁰

The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education was established in 1967 in Berkeley, California, by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The Commission published a report in 1968, which established the principles the Commission deemed to be most important in affecting government funding of higher education.

These principles were as follows:

1. The Commission is in opposition to the development of a single national system of higher education. Basic support of and responsibility for higher education should remain with the states and with private initiative.
2. The highest single priority for federal funding was to help fulfill the two-century old American dream of social justice.
3. Students should be given the maximum freedom of choice in choosing the institution they wish to attend.
4. Federal aid should be given in a manner which does not encourage the states and private sectors to reduce their support.

⁶⁰Ibid., 59.

5. The form of federal aid should minimize constitutional problems and hopefully eliminate them all together.
6. The autonomy of institutions should be preserved.

These factors led the Carnegie Commission to recommend federal aid patterned after the G.I. Bill since this type of assistance most nearly met the criteria established.⁶¹

In 1979 President Carter saw his major emphasis in the field of education come to reality when he signed into law legislation creating a Department of Education. Carter stated,

This is a significant milestone in my effort to make the federal government more effective. We will now have a single cabinet department which can provide the coherence and sense of direction needed to manage billions of dollars in U.S. education funds.⁶²

The election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency in 1980 sent shock waves throughout the educational community. Reagan campaigned on a budget cutting platform which left no doubt that educational programs once considered untouchable were going to be vulnerable and, perhaps, even expendable. It was in this arena that Carl Dewey Perkins (Democrat, Kentucky), the subject of this paper, fought some of the most difficult battles of his legislative career which covered almost four decades. Reagan's cutbacks affected some programs, but basically

⁶¹Carnegie Commission, 2-3.

⁶²Wilson, 65.

the structure of the federal role in education remained the same as it had been before Reagan took office.⁶³

Specifically affecting higher education, the Reagan Administration enacted expansions in student eligibility without increasing funding. The result of this approach was to shift the benefits assistance of federal aid from needy students to those less needy. Funds were withdrawn from the needs-based Pell Program (formerly Basic Education Opportunity Grants) to satisfy the demands of the GSL Program. Dr. Alice Rivlin, at that time Director of the Congressional Budget Office, warned, "Without some change in the current programs, federal student assistance will almost certainly continue to shift away from helping the most needy students."⁶⁴

In President Reagan's final term higher education funding was affected most by the failure of appropriations for student aid to keep pace with the spiraling cost of tuition in colleges and universities. Most of the programs were still in place, even though called by different names, but the Gramm-Rudmann legislation forced across the board cuts in most programs eliminating financial aid for many marginal students.

⁶³Jack Jennings, "Will Carl Perkins' Legacy Survive Ronald Reagan's Policies?" Phi Delta Kappan, April 1985, 566.

⁶⁴Wilson, 74.

All present programs available to students have been heavily slanted toward need-based situations. The Stafford Loan Program (formerly known as the GSL) has been altered to require students to prove need before funds will be approved. Pell Grants are now virtually impossible to obtain for a student whose family income is above \$25,000 annually. Perkins Loans (formerly National Defense Student Loans, or National Direct Student Loans) are made available to the various institutions which are then responsible for lending these funds to students who can demonstrate need based upon federal guidelines.⁶⁵

The involvement of the federal government in funding for higher education has changed dramatically over the past two hundred years. From the early emphasis upon assistance to the institutions themselves, the government has moved steadily in the direction of making aid available to the individual student through direct grants and loan opportunities. Based upon the current thinking permeating the educational arena, and the trend in governmental circles toward movement in the direction of a balanced budget, there would not seem to be any major changes in store for the near future which

⁶⁵Mrs. Tara Van Curen, Director of Financial Aid, Kentucky Christian College, interview by author, Grayson, Kentucky, 9 November 1989.

would alter federal funding for higher education in any innovative fashion.

CHAPTER 4

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF CARL D. PERKINS

The Seventh Congressional District consists of twenty-two full counties and portions of a twenty-third lying in the southeastern section of Kentucky. Recent redistricting altered the county alignment somewhat from the original structure present when Carl Dewey Perkins was first elected to serve as its Congressman in the fall of 1948.

The area is extremely mountainous, lying in the region known as Appalachia. The main industry has been coal mining with the fortunes of the area rising and falling with fluctuations in the coal industry. Fortunes have been made overnight and vanished just as quickly, as the economic conditions and direction of the country moved toward or away from coal as an energy source.

During much of the tenure of Congressman Perkins, the area was considered one of the most economically depressed regions in the country. The area is predominantly rural with some industrialization in those areas along the Ohio River near the city of Ashland. The district has few community resources such as nursing homes, foster homes, or institutions for the aged. Traditionally the average per capita income for the

district is below the national level by a significant margin. An example is the year 1968, when the average income was \$1,332 in the Seventh District, as compared to \$2,614 for Kentucky as a whole, and \$3,159 for the nation.¹ The trend has continued with the latest figures available indicating Appalachian Kentucky still lags behind the state as a whole and the country in median income.

For years the district held the distinction of being one of the most thickly populated rural areas in the country. Even during the 1960s the area remained basically populous despite a 10 percent population loss as coal miners, unable to find jobs or concerned about mine safety, emigrated to Northern industrial areas to find work in factories.² This trend has been reversed as the population in the district has grown from 444,821 in 1960,³ to 460,125 in 1970,⁴ to 526,284 in the 1980

¹Judy Gardner, "Carl D. Perkins: The Poor Are Always with Him," National Journal, 8 January 1972, 73-74.

²Lora J. Glickman, Carl D. Perkins: Democratic Representative from Kentucky, Citizens Look at Congress Series (Washington, DC: Grossman Publishers, 1972), 2.

³Congressional Directory, 91st Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1970), 69.

⁴Mary M. Wright, comp., State Directory of Kentucky 1973 (Pewee Valley, KY: Directories, Inc., 1973), 140.

census,⁵ and to 560,300 in the estimated population figures of 1988.⁶

More than thirty thousand tobacco growers live in the district, and the mid-1970s reports indicated that over one-half of the territory for the first time consisted of farmers. Besides tobacco and coal, livestock, petroleum refining, and primary metal industries contribute slightly to the economy. About 80 percent of the people are considered rural dwellers as compared to the national average of about 26 percent; 70 percent of the people are blue-collar workers, compared to 35 percent nationally. Blacks and foreign ethnic groups account for only 2 percent of the population,⁷ whereas nationally blacks comprise 6.2 percent and foreign ethnic groups 11.8 percent of the population.⁸

The political identity of Appalachian Kentucky was established during the 1930s by the New Deal and the United Mine Workers (UMW). The miners became Democrats

⁵Congressional Directory, 98th Cong. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1984), 77.

⁶Mary M. Wright, comp., State Directory of Kentucky 1990 (Pewee Valley, KY: Directories, Inc., 1990), 216.

⁷Glickman, 2.

⁸The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1990 (New York: Newspaper Enterprise Associates, 1989), 551.

and have remained so despite the declining fortunes of the UMW over the past several years.⁹

In recent years an influx of federal money and a renewed usage of coal as an energy source have spurred a great deal of economic and social development in the district. New highways have opened up much of the area to the rest of the state. Funds provided for flood control and the rerouting of streams have eliminated a significant amount of seasonal flood damage and created new land for home builders.

While still behind the national averages per capita in income, the area is making great strides toward utilizing its natural resources and shedding the "poverty stigma" that has been attached to it over the past decades. One of the major factors in the development of this region has been the vast amount of federal assistance which was brought into the area as a result of the work of Carl D. Perkins, representative from the Seventh Kentucky Congressional District.

Carl Dewey Perkins was born October 15, 1912, in Hindman, a small town of eight hundred located in Knott County in the mountains of southeastern Kentucky. He was one of four children from a prosperous family by the standards of mountain society in those days. His mother,

⁹Glickman, 2.

Doris Calhoun Perkins, was a school teacher, and his father, James Elbert Perkins, was a lawyer and prominent county political figure, having served as school superintendent and county attorney. Part of the early training of the Perkins' children involved a strong commitment to the work ethic that dominated the mountaineers' attitude.

The Perkins' house, on the outskirts of town, was a lodging place for visiting lawyers, judges, politicians, and hill folk who came over rugged trails to the county seat for supplies. Perkins' father owned one of the few carriages in town, and young Carl drove visitors to the railheads at Hazard and Wayland for \$1.50 a trip.¹⁰ These trips served to acquaint Perkins with just about every family in the county, and, by his own admission, with all the politicians.¹¹

Perkins was known as the best "plowboy" in the community and made spending money in the spring and fall working gardens for the people in Hindman. Just about everyone had a small garden plot of some type. Perkins rose about daylight and plowed until 8:00 A.M. at which time he went to school. After school was over, he began

¹⁰Bill Peterson, "Carl Perkins: Kentucky's Most Powerful Congressman," Louisville Courier-Journal, 2 February 1975, F4.

¹¹Ibid.

plowing once again and continued until dark. He was always appreciative of the fact that his father "learned [him] a little business sense when [he] was young."¹²

After graduation from the Knott County School System, Perkins attended both Caney Junior College (now known as Alice Lloyd College) in Pippa Passes, Kentucky, and Lees College in Jackson, Kentucky. After his having completed two years of college Perkins' father died and, at the age of nineteen, he accepted the position of teacher in a two-room school on Montgomery Creek.¹³ Ninety students attended the little school, and his starting salary was \$59.60 per month. He managed to shorten the eight mile trip to the school to five miles by riding a horse across a mountain.

It became obvious almost at once that his meager salary offered very little opportunity for advancement, so he applied for admission and entered the Jefferson School of Law in Louisville, Kentucky. He was graduated in 1935 and returned to Hindman where his brother-in-law, Clark Pratt, gave him workmen's compensation and estate cases.¹⁴ In 1938 Perkins married Verna Johnson. In 1939 they purchased a farmhouse about three miles outside of

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

Hindman, beside one of the main roads leading into town. This house was to be home for Perkins and his family for the next forty-five years as he journeyed between his district and his duties in Washington.

Perkins made his first race for county attorney in 1937, during the Great Depression. He allied himself with Ruby Watts, a friend of the family who was running for sheriff. Perkins' opponent was another young lawyer named Dick Martin. Both candidates were young and ambitious, making the campaign one of the most hotly contested in Knott County history. Martin defeated Perkins, teaching him a lesson he never forgot. He never again lost an election.

During this time Perkins developed the campaign strategy which made him undefeatable in every election from that point on. He never relied solely on the usual printed material but concentrated on shaking as many hands and meeting as many people as possible. He was blessed with a remarkable ability to remember names and faces, even though he might have met the person for only a few minutes in a crowd. If he did not know the individual personally, his first question was always, "Who is your Daddy?" Once the lineage was established, there always seemed to be someone in the family Perkins knew and he had helped in some way or other over the years. As he roamed the streets of the small towns in

his district, he always wanted to hear the needs of his constituents. Many times he pulled a notebook out of his pocket and wrote down some request passed on to him in one of those impromptu meetings. Staff members recalled many instances in which Perkins would return from his weekly visits to his district with his pockets full of scraps of paper on which he had written the requests of his constituents. Most of the papers had only first names written on them because he knew the people so well he did not need their surname.¹⁵

Many became critical of Perkins because of his constant attention to the demands of the people in his district. Perkins answered that accusation by simply stating that he always put the country first and the district second, but stressed the idea that a good congressman always kept in contact with his people. He was there to help sponsor legislation for the welfare of his people and his nation.¹⁶ This close contact with the people who elected him taught Carl D. Perkins many lessons which served him well over the years.

Perkins' first experience in the state level political arena came in 1939. With an appointment from Governor Keen Johnson he was selected to complete an

¹⁵Gardner, 73-74.

¹⁶Ibid.

unexpired term as commonwealth attorney for the thirty-first judicial district. In 1940 he was elected as a member of the Kentucky General Assembly, representing the ninety-ninth district. In 1941 Perkins made another run for Knott County Attorney and this time was successful, serving in that capacity until 1943.¹⁷

Perkins' political career was interrupted in 1943 when he enlisted in the United States Army as a private. He took part in battles in Northern Europe, the Ardennes, the Rhineland, and central Europe. He was discharged in 1945 with the rank of sergeant and immediately returned to Hindman where he was elected once again to the office of county attorney. He served in that post until 1948 when he resigned to become counsel for the Department of Highways at Frankfort.¹⁸

During this period Perkins associated himself with the Clements-Wetherby-Combs faction of the Democratic Party in Kentucky. With the endorsement of Governor Earle Clements he made his first race for Congress in 1948. As long as the Clements-Wetherby-Combs faction continued to exercise a great deal of influence in state politics, Perkins maintained his association, but in the latter years of his career he preferred to stay out of

¹⁷Charles Moritz, ed., Current Biography 1968 (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1969), 313.

¹⁸Ibid.

primary fights and supported all state and national Democratic nominees.¹⁹

Perkins entered Congress when Harry Truman was elected President in 1948 and always viewed Truman and Lyndon Johnson as his favorites in that office. He admired Truman for his willingness to fight against the odds and Johnson because of his down home attitudes and concern for the poor and underprivileged.²⁰ During his first year in Congress, Perkins was appointed to the House Education and Labor Committee, and he soon became known as one of its most hard-working and dedicated members.²¹

The early background of Perkins in the mountains of eastern Kentucky had a great deal of impact in his decision to make this area of legislation his own particular field of expertise. He came from a family that was educated and had been taught to understand its value. He had also seen the effects of a lack of education as he lived in the midst of the economic depression that so marked the Kentucky mountains during his early life. Young people by the scores were forced to leave their homes in search of jobs, and those who remained were

¹⁹Peterson, F4.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Moritz, 313.

hampered by their lack of education and the grip of the coal mine owners over the entire economic status of the area. By accepting the position on the Education and Labor Committee, Perkins placed himself in a position to affect those two areas he felt were vital to the well-being of the nation and the people of his own district.

The voting record of Carl D. Perkins in his early years in Congress gave evidence to his eventual label as a border-state liberal, and one of the least Southern of the Southerners.²² He tried to gain repeal of the Taft-Hartley Labor Management Relations Act. He attempted to add an amendment to the Submerged Lands Act that would have authorized the use of royalties from resources in submerged lands for educational purposes. He was a consistent supporter of civil rights legislation, including the Civil Rights Acts of 1956, 1957, 1960, 1964, 1966. In doing so Perkins became one of the few representatives from the South to take a stand on this, at that time, controversial topic.

Perkins expressed an interest in a wide variety of issues during his first years in Washington, but his most consistent efforts were always directed toward

²²Glickman, 26.

legislation relating to education, poverty, and benefits for coal miners and producers.

Many were critical of Perkins' attempts to justify federal poverty money for his district, but the people of the area respected him for his obvious devotion to their needs. In 1967, Jack Ayer, writing in the Louisville Courier-Journal stated,

The political calculus of Eastern Kentucky requires any ambitious person to consort with a dismaying array of self-servers and glory seekers. Perkins gets along with all of them. Yet the tarnish has never brushed off on Perkins' reputation in Congress. Thus, for eighteen years, Perkins has haggled and cajoled funds for the poor out of the federal government. In a sense, it is possible to characterize him as a champion boodler, with a lusty appetite for congressional pork. Some of the money Perkins has conveyed to Eastern Kentucky undoubtedly has gone to line the pockets of the local bosses. At the same time, there is no evidence that as much as a penny of the boodle stuck to Perkins. And it is clear that for every dollar wasted by mountain politicians, many dollars have helped those in the Appalachian mountains.²³

Perkins was praised by those in the mountains for his extensive work in legislation involving the coal industry. Over fifteen thousand miners received black lung benefits from the government because of his efforts, and his legislative initiative brought improved safety standards to the mines.

²³Jack Ayer, "A Successor to Powell? Carl Perkins in Number 2," Louisville Courier-Journal (2 January 1967), quoted in Glickman, 4.

Without doubt the area which gained the most from Perkins' efforts was education. He began the fight for federal aid to education in 1949. Drew Pearson wrote on August 7, 1949,

It is possible to call the roll of the friends and foes of aid to education. Chairman John Lesinski used every move in the book to block the bill. Perkins said, 'If you mess up this effort to help our schools, I'll feel like wringing your neck.' There was a smile on Perkins' face as he said this, but no joviality in his voice.²⁴

Perkins would later comment on the outcome of this issue:

"The vote was very close in the House Education Committee." A representative named Richard Nixon was against federal aid to education, even back in 1949. He persuaded another Californian to switch his vote to nay to make the tally thirteen against, twelve for. That bill would give \$15 million annually to Kentucky schools.²⁵ In 1951 Perkins introduced HR545, which provided for \$300 million in federal aid to education directly in proportion to the number of school age children and inversely proportional to the wealth of the states. In 1961 Perkins introduced a bill to establish an adult basic education program and a work-study program. Both were later incorporated in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. After losing a battle in 1962

²⁴Drew Pearson, Washington Post (7 August 1949), quoted in Glickman, 9.

²⁵Glickman, 9.

to bring a youth training bill to the floor Perkins managed to gain passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963.²⁶ Perkins' floor-managed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 which made federal aid available to schools for the first time. The act provided general aid to school districts for projects to meet the special needs of educationally-deprived children. Title I of Perkins' HR2362 provided grants to the states (which in turn distributed funds to school districts) on the basis of the number of children from low income families times 50 percent of each state's average expenditures per child. Drew Pearson wrote that Perkins worked eighteen hours a day to report this bill out of subcommittee. To accomplish this, Perkins had to battle both a Republican boycott and parochial school opposition.²⁷ Perkins often remarked that he considered this piece of legislation as one of the most important of his career. As chairman of the subcommittee considering this legislation, he expedited action on the legislation, holding hearings in an unprecedented extension of sessions in order to avoid delays in the consideration of the bill. The fact that the bill received only one minor

²⁶Ibid., 22.

²⁷Ibid., 21.

amendment on the floor of the House and none in the Senate was a credit to the careful work performed by Perkins.²⁸

Perkins was also instrumental in the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963. This milestone piece of legislation was sponsored by Perkins while he was chairman of the General Education Subcommittee, and when passed, served to expand old programs and inaugurate a new program of federally-supported vocational education. Perkins followed this up in 1968 which enlarged even further the federal support in this area which he viewed as so important in helping men and women to learn trades which made them more productive members of society.

Early in his career Congressman Perkins made his stand on education very clear as he sponsored the Library Services Act in 1956. This act provided aid for public libraries in rural areas. Perkins later threw his influence behind a series of amendments in 1966 which greatly expanded the program.²⁹

One should not construe that Perkins was interested only in the field of education in those years before he became Chairman of the Education and Labor

²⁸George Wolfford, "Biography of Honorable Carl D. Perkins" (Ashland, KY, 1974), 1.

²⁹Ibid.

Committee. His involvement in other legislative action included cosponsoring the Area Redevelopment Act, the Manpower Development and Training Act, the Public Works Acceleration Act, the Small Water Protection Act, and the Water Pollution Control Act.³⁰

One way in which Perkins felt he could serve his district was through legislation promoting flood control. For years floods had ravaged the mountains causing huge property losses and occasional deaths. Perkins became an ardent advocate of flood control and water resource development, not only in eastern Kentucky, but elsewhere in the nation as well. Many of these projects were welcomed by the people of the area, but there were others which caused political problems for Perkins. The proposed Kehoe Dam in Carter and Greenup counties of eastern Kentucky was stopped by a coalition of angry citizens who protested the taking of their homes and farms for a flood control project that was neither needed nor wanted. The Red River Dam in Powell County was eventually tabled by protests from environmentalists who contended the dam would erase some of the most scenic territory in the eastern United States. Even with such vocal opposition Perkins remained firm in his commitment, claiming that having watched floods ravage

³⁰Ibid.

the mountains for decades, he was convinced that more dams, not fewer, were needed.³¹

Perkins' interest in labor problems generally was concentrated in the field of increased employment. In 1961 he sponsored a measure to establish a local area employment service corps. This provision later served as a model for a section included in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. In 1966 Perkins argued for the support of the Job Corps and the Neighborhood Youth Corps. He was especially adamant about striking out a provision which limited to twenty-four months work-study programs for the hard-core unemployed.³²

After spending eighteen years faithfully performing his duties as a member of the Education and Labor Committee, Perkins was suddenly vaulted from obscurity into the public eye when he replaced Adam Clayton Powell as chairman in 1967.

Powell was stripped of his chairmanship of the committee on January 9, 1967, by a caucus of Democratic congressmen. He had been accused of mismanagement of the committee staff and travel funds. As the second ranking member of the committee, Perkins was designated committee chairman in a resolution introduced by Morris

³¹Peterson, F4.

³²Glickman, 10.

K. Udall of Arizona and passed by voice vote. The replacement of Powell by Perkins marked the first time since 1925 that a House committee chairman was removed from office and stripped of his seniority.

Perkins received respect from his peers for the manner in which he conducted himself during the proceedings which eventually elevated him to chairmanship of the committee. For weeks while critics in Congress attacked Powell, Perkins was careful not to get involved. As the man who would gain the most from Powell's fall, he determined it would be impolitic to say anything. When the closed-door caucus debated Powell's fate, Perkins did not speak. When the Democrats took a voice vote to oust the chairman, Perkins refused to vote. When the session was over and Powell confronted the army of reporters waiting outside the House chamber, Perkins quietly made his way back to his office. Many viewed this as a fitting scene to close the era in which Powell gathered headlines and notoriety while Perkins labored unobtrusively as the number two man.³³

Few individuals were in Congress who were more unlike than Adam Clayton Powell and Carl Dewey Perkins.

³³William Greider, "Perkins Grins as Spotlight Shines on Him," Louisville Courier-Journal, 10 January 1967, A1.

These differences reflected themselves in the methods used in chairing the House Committee. U.S. News and World Report made this comparison: "Mr. Powell has been garrulous and flamboyant. Mr. Perkins is regarded as quiet and self-effacing. Mr. Perkins has the reputation of being a team member."³⁴

Jack Ayer in the Louisville Courier-Journal wrote:

The contrast between Perkins and Powell is a lesson on the pitfalls and potentialities of the democratic system. In important respects they are alike. Both speak for the "other American," the multitudes of poor people still trying to cut themselves a slice of the national abundance. But they speak with entirely different voices. Powell speaks the complacency of middle-class respectability with a dazzling Phillipic about black power. Perkins trudges the corridors of the Capitol plumping for welfare legislation in a mountain twang.³⁵

The differences between the two men were soon made evident in the leadership of the committee. The Congressional Quarterly stated the case very accurately when it reported, "In his conduct of the Committee, Perkins is the antithesis of Powell. Perkins is a team player, shuns the limelight, and is noncontroversial."³⁶ Where Powell was viewed as a man prepared to stage a crusade to

³⁴"Reform Hits Capitol Hill: Powell is Pushed Aside," U.S. News & World Report, 23 January 1967, 14; quoted by Glickman, 18.

³⁵Jack Ayer, "A Successor to Powell," Louisville Courier-Journal, 2 January 1967; quoted in Glickman, 18.

³⁶Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report 25 (13 January 1967): 55-56; Glickman, 18.

gain his way, Perkins was not seen in this light. Most observers indicated that a crusade would be the last thing they would expect from Perkins. His method was to provide everyone on the committee with an opportunity to have input into the legislation, while it was his task as chairman to tie it all together.

The contrasting attitudes and lifestyles of Perkins and Powell inevitably led to comparisons in the manner in which they ran the committee. Some liked Powell more because he was a brilliant chairman and ran the committee with a firm hand. They complained Perkins was too lax and did not push matters along with as much efficiency as Powell. They felt Perkins' use of low pressure tactics and his reluctance to cut anyone off in hearings caused matters to move too slowly. Others felt Perkins was not specific enough in establishing his position. One subcommittee staff aide complained of Perkins' lack of communication with subcommittee chairmen:

He speaks in vague terms and is a little erratic in committee. It would help to know what his position is--is he open to amendments, will he fight you behind the scenes? Poor planning on the floor sometimes makes the committee look bungling and inept.³⁷

Some people close to Perkins contend that his major weakness lay in the fact he always tried to do too

³⁷National Journal 4 (8 January 1972): 72; quoted in Glickman, 19.

much himself. Many felt Perkins tried to undertake more work than it was possible for him to handle. Perhaps it was this lack of organizational ability, and his lack of desire to delegate authority that led Perkins to gain the reputation of an endurance man. Perkins conducted hearings until all hours of the night, concluding only when the business was finished. Committee meetings were allowed to continue at length because of the loose style he used in his chairmanship. He placed no limit on the amount of time an individual could speak and often called in numerous people to testify at hearings.³⁸

Those who supported Perkins were quick to come to his defense as chairman of the committee. When asked to comment on the style of Perkins, one staffer replied,

You have to understand the committee to understand Perkins' role. The committee tends to have strong personalities. Mr. Perkins allows his subcommittee chairman [sic] a lot of leeway. It is a tough committee to hold together but Perkins does it.³⁹

Another staffer stated:

Although Perkins uses low pressure tactics and some committee members and staff berate him for his lax, loose methods, it is hard to argue with success. Perkins manages to get a lot of legislation through.⁴⁰

In reference to the complaint that Perkins created long hours because of his lack of organization, many who

³⁸Glickman, 19-20.

³⁹Ibid., 19.

⁴⁰Ibid.

knew him well contended this was not true. Perkins was simply a hard worker who was used to long hours and did not mind expecting them of others. He ran his campaigns in this way, often being in meetings until 3:00 A.M. and then rising at 6:00 A.M. to go shake some more hands as the workers went out to their jobs. When he arrived at his Washington office at 7:00 A.M. after having spent until midnight in committee meetings, it was only a carry-over from the same lifestyle he had practiced all his life.

Times did exist when the rigid schedule took its toll. In June, 1972, the congressman collapsed in his home from fatigue. Three days before, he and his committee had completed action on a package of higher education legislation after six weeks of what one member termed "the meanest and most difficult conference I have yet encountered."⁴¹ About 350 differences existed between the House and Senate versions that had to be resolved. The emotional issue of busing was intense. No one but Carl Perkins thought a bill could be reported out, but it happened even though the final session lasted until 5:00 A.M. Even Perkins himself was forced to admit that the fight had taken a lot out of him.

⁴¹Ibid., 20.

Analysts felt Perkins' main problem as chairman was not his personality or work habit, but rather the composition of his committee. The thirty-eight member committee was considered more liberal in outlook than the House as a whole. Committee members included five women, three Negroes, and nineteen members from California and the Northeast. One aide stated,

The committee is extremely liberal. It doesn't take into consideration what the House reaction will be to a bill it reports. There is fight after fight on the House floor and the bills are rewritten.⁴²

Perkins voiced no dissatisfaction with his committee makeup, but did say he would have preferred

to see us have a more moderate Southerner or two. It would have helped in the long run: we could iron out more differences in committee with less chance of an upset on the floor. I do try to be a moderating influence, but the House has not gone overboard in changing our legislation. We just have more controversial measures than any other committee. There are a lot of emotional issues.⁴³

There were many times when being chairman of the committee placed Perkins in the position as target for intense lobbying. Perkins refused to allow this type of pressure to affect him. An example of this attitude could be seen when he came out in favor of a \$2 billion federal child-care program in 1971. Many conservative groups opposed the passage of the bill calling it "the

⁴²Gardner, 74.

⁴³Ibid.

Child Control Act." Perkins resisted every attempt to induce him to change his stand. When the bill was vetoed by President Nixon, Perkins referred to it as "a stab in the back of our rural people" and vowed to introduce similar legislation in the next session of Congress.⁴⁴

Several changes were brought about in the committee setup when Perkins became chairman. Besides adding one subcommittee (agricultural labor), Perkins became the first committee chairman to divide funds proportionally with the Republican minority. During the tenure of Powell an estimated two hundred aides worked for him in various capacities in one year and were continually on and off the payroll. Perkins dropped eighteen staffers in the first month at a savings of \$256,000 to the taxpayers and introduced a bookkeeping system to account for every penny of public money.⁴⁵ In response to questions about his use of public funds Perkins replied:

I want you to feel free to examine the books at all times. They will always be open from now on. We welcome scrutiny from the press. We are going to operate in a goldfish bowl as far as the public is concerned. For one thing, as long as I'm chairman,

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Drew Pearson, "Powell Absence Saving U.S. Money," Washington Post, 29 April 1967; cited by Glickman, 17.

there is to be no unauthorized or unjustified travel. I'm going to clear all trips, even short ones, and the money spent on them.⁴⁶

During his tenure as committee chairman Perkins was instrumental in the passage of legislation which did much to establish the core of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society program. Perkins was not comfortable with John F. Kennedy even though he liked him as a person. During Kennedy's term in the House Perkins sat on the same committee as the future President and often held his proxy. The men who surrounded Kennedy were the source of Perkins' discomfort. He never felt at ease in the company of these Ivy League New Frontiersmen.⁴⁷

Lyndon Johnson was another matter. Perkins often remarked that he and Johnson were on the same "wave length." Both were creatures of congressional and back-country politics, men who never shed their regional accents and mannerisms. Johnson depended on Perkins' support and understood his needs. When a crisis arose, Perkins felt free to telephone the White House, sometimes even at early hours, and expected to receive prompt attention to his request. An example of this took place when federal officials ruled that Pikeville, Kentucky, would not be eligible for federal funds as representative

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Peterson, F4.

of the "model cities" program. A call by Perkins to Johnson cleared the request in a very brief period.⁴⁸

Perkins never cared a great deal for Richard Nixon. As previously mentioned in this paper, Nixon engineered the defeat of a bill in 1949 which would have meant \$15 million in federal aid for Kentucky. Perkins never forgot that and used his influence to thwart many of Nixon's proposed budget cuts during his administration. It was Perkins' opinion that the country got out of control because Nixon had a group of "superfools" around him. In the process of gaining control of the President they gained control of Congress, and because of that, all the rest of the world. This resulted in their desire to get even with their enemies, and it became all they could think about.⁴⁹

At the time of his death Perkins was embroiled in attempting to save many of those programs he had helped to initiate from the budget cuts of the Reagan Administration. It was a very frustrating experience for him to see many of those Great Society programs he had labored to make a part of the political landscape of this country thrown on the scrap pile. There were times when Perkins believed he was not going to be very successful

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹George Wolfford, "Testimonial Dinner Honors Carl Perkins," Ashland Daily Independent, 27 October 1974, 1.

in his attempts to rescue any of those programs. Speaking at a fund raising dinner for his old alma mater, the Hindman Settlement School, just a few months before his death, Perkins made the statement, "If any of my programs survive they'll be lucky. Medicaid, Medicare, everything's in trouble."⁵⁰

Perkins ended his career in Congress characteristically with a victory. He managed to push through the House the so-called equal access bill, which enabled religious groups to have the same rights in regard to school facilities as other extracurricular organizations. He was preparing to continue to fight to save his programs and institute new ones when he died during the congressional recess in 1984.

On August 3, 1984, Carl Perkins suffered a massive heart attack on board a Piedmont Airlines jet. He had complained during the previous week of chest pains which had been diagnosed as a virus. According to his wife Verna, he had had a history of heart problems but had tried to keep them a secret. "He felt there was just too much at stake for him to begin to take it easy, especially when the Reagan budget cuts were threatening

⁵⁰Desson Howe, "Laboring for Education: Carl and Verna Perkins Boost Their Alma Mater," Washington Post, 8 March 1984, B3.

the programs he had devoted his public life to bringing into existence."⁵¹

Perkins had collapsed in 1972 from sheer physical exhaustion following a legislative battle over an educational bill. There were many who believed this was the beginning of the health problem which eventually ended his life. It was typical of Perkins that he never changed his lifestyle nor deviated from the hectic pace he set for himself as head of the Education and Labor Committee.

Perkins was returning to Lexington from a visit to his district to dedicate a public building in one of the small communities. He complained of shortness of breath during the flight and collapsed in a restroom on the plane shortly after it landed about 11:20 A.M. Paramedics who treated him at Lexington's Blue Grass Field found no trace of a pulse. He was rushed to St. Joseph's Hospital and was pronounced dead at 12:37 P.M.⁵² Strangely enough at a testimonial dinner honoring Perkins only a few months before, he had made the comment that he hoped his appearance would quiet any rumors which might have been circulating concerning his being in bad health.

⁵¹Mrs. Carl D. Perkins, interview by author, Hindman, Kentucky, 16 August 1989.

⁵²Marjorie Hunter, "Rep. Carl D. Perkin Dies at 71; Led the Fight for Social Programs," New York Times, 4 August 1984, 28.

Perkins' body was taken to his home town of Hindman, Kentucky, where it lay in state in the high school gymnasium. Thousands of people filed through the gymnasium silently paying their respects to the only representative most of them had ever known. More than three thousand gathered in the facility for the funeral services. Included among those assembled for the funeral were numerous state and local officials including Governor Martha Layne Collins and four former governors. All eight members of Kentucky's congressional delegation were present, and reflecting the esteem in which Perkins was held in Washington, nearly eighty members of Congress made the trip to Hindman to honor the memory of their colleague.

Major eulogies were delivered by the then Speaker of the House, Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neil, House Majority Leader Jim Wright, and Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts.

O'Neil praised Perkins for the impact he had in Congress and for the fact he was proud to be called a liberal. He recalled the countless occasions on which Perkins grabbed his arm and implored, "Thirty seconds, Mr. Speaker. This is legislation we must fight for."⁵³

⁵³R. G. Dunlop, "Rep. Perkins Laid to Rest in His Beloved Kentucky Hills," Louisville Courier-Journal, 8 August 1984, A1.

Wright called his fellow Democrat "a country lawyer from the hills of Kentucky who was a giant of a man in our day." Wright went on to say, "No man has done more for those who needed his help than Carl Perkins did in forty years of public service." He noted that the list of Perkins' achievements "ranged from highways to hospitals, from . . . lunches to vocational education."⁵⁴

Kennedy referred to Perkins as one of the few true giants among the men and women who have shaped the destiny of America. He compared Perkins to his late brother John F. Kennedy, stating both refused to believe the impossible could not be accomplished. "Congress will not be the same without him, and the country is the better for him. Carl Perkins left deeds to guide our way."⁵⁵

After the service was completed about one hundred of the mourners journeyed to the burial plot in the Perkins Cemetery on a hill in back of the house Perkins had called home since 1939. There he was laid to rest in the land that he loved and close to the people he had served for thirty-six years as their voice in the Congress of the United States.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid.

During his long tenure in the House Perkins made many political enemies. Many of them considered him to be one of the major reasons for the huge budget deficits that were fueled by the social programs inaugurated during the Kennedy and Johnson years. One of the members of Perkins' own committee stated,

He is one of the most bullheaded members of Congress. He smiles and clutches your arm, but watch out. He would do anything to get his way. Almost everyone in his district gets a benefit check. The more money he can shovel out the more godlike he appears. He's considered a deity in Eastern Kentucky. He has a deity complex.⁵⁶

Perkins' opponent in the 1972 primary, Bessie Smith, conceded that Perkins had poured millions of dollars into poverty programs and food stamps but criticized him for not doing more to create jobs instead of longer welfare roles.

In spite of the fact that his long career produced many who disagreed with his politics, it was universally accepted that the man was a master politician and was praised for his honesty. Perkins never made the mistake of allowing the glitter and glamor of Washington to separate him from his constituents. In fact, he returned to his district almost every weekend during his Washington years to listen to the needs and desires of the people who sent him to Congress.

⁵⁶"Perkins Goes to War for Social Programs," Louisville Courier-Journal, 12 April 1981, D4.

In running his campaigns Perkins was a tireless worker never taking anything for granted. Even though the closest race he had was in 1956, when a strong Republican year coupled with some political redistricting by Kentucky Governor Albert B. Chandler brought his victory margin down to 52 percent, Perkins strongly believed in taking his case to the people. In 1982 when the Kentucky General Assembly's redistricting plan threatened to remove Powell County from the Seventh Congressional District, Perkins pulled every string possible in order to stop the transfer. His reputation as the the senior congressman from Kentucky, his staunch support of the Democratic Party, and his reputation as a man who fought for the interests of Kentucky turned the tide in his favor. When a revised version of the reapportionment plans emerged from the House State Government committee, Powell County was still in the Seventh District. Perkins expressed his satisfaction with the simple statement, "It should never have been taken out of there in the first place."⁵⁷ Even in matters such as this there were always those who disagreed with Perkins and challenged his reasoning. Congressman Larry Hopkins remarked that Perkins wanted the district to remain the same so he could "put it in

⁵⁷Bob Johnson, "Perkins Has One County in 'Grocery' Bag," Louisville Courier-Journal, 22 January 1982, B2.

his will," referring to the widely held and ultimately accurate belief that Perkins' son Chris would eventually succeed his father in Washington.⁵⁸

Despite his political enemies Perkins was never accused of dishonesty. In his campaigns and in the dealings with committee funds Perkins always held himself up to strict accountability. Drew Pearson, writing in 1961, made the following observation:

Those who know Perkins call him the most honest member of Congress. Perkins never accepts a campaign contribution from anyone for whom he has done a favor or if he thinks the donor expects a favor. He has been known to turn down \$500 or more addressed to him. He also never accepts contributions from office assistants--rather unique for Capitol Hill. As a result, he usually has to dig down in his own pocket to the tune of \$4,000 or \$5,000 every time he runs for re-election. He is equally scrupulous in other ways. Many colleagues use their telephone and telegraph allotments (paid by the taxpayers) for both personal and official business. Not Perkins. He regularly sends checks to the Washington telephone company for personal phone calls from his office; the bill sometimes is as high as \$150 a month. While some members of the Congress use their free mailing frank for personal, unofficial letters, Perkins puts postage stamps on all personal letters. Once or twice when a personal letter has been franked out of his office by mistake, Perkins asked the House postmaster to track it down and return it for a stamp. Perkins also makes it a practice of never accepting gifts of any kind, even if well intended. A few years ago Perkins helped a disabled World War I veteran with three children obtain a Social Security disability allowance. The veteran was so grateful that he knitted a beautiful white shawl and brought it in a wheelchair to Perkins' office. The congressman was on the House floor at the time, but when he returned and saw the shawl, he smiled

⁵⁸Ibid.

appreciatively. Then he told an aide, "We'll have to send it back with a note of thanks. I did a favor for that old gentleman."⁵⁹

Even those individuals who were critical of Perkins for his efforts to funnel more and more federal dollars into eastern Kentucky have never found cause to make accusations concerning his personal finances. He was never accused of improprieties in handling the funds of the committee which he chaired. He himself declared that all money under the control of the Education and Labor Committee would be strictly accounted for and even instigated a new system of bookkeeping to make this possible. All who desired to do so were free to examine the books of the committee.

Many attributed this attitude to the fall of Adam Clayton Powell and contended that Perkins was just reacting to the problem that contributed to the ouster of his predecessor. Those who knew Perkins said this was ridiculous because he was this way long before he was ever chairman of the committee. In going over the records of his campaign expenditures one finds that Perkins scrupulously reported every expense even to the point of noting repairs to his muffler or tires on the old Ford Falcon he drove up until the last years of his life. When asked about how he handled his airline credit

⁵⁹Drew Pearson, Washington Post, 29 October 1961; quoted in Glickman, 7.

card in regard to his travel Perkins replied, "I never had an air travel card."⁶⁰

During one of Perkins' campaigns he scheduled a speaking engagement with two other Democrats in the district. Someone had placed an advertisement for the speech in the newspaper and when Perkins saw it, he found out the cost, paid one-third of the expense, and listed it as a campaign expenditure although the speech actually had nothing to do with the campaign as such."⁶¹

Scruples such as this led Drew Pearson to describe Perkins as "a quiet and unpretentious man" who possessed "the same rugged and dedicated approach to public service as another famous Kentuckian--Abe Lincoln."⁶²

Incorporated into this honesty with which he dealt with financial matters was Perkins' devotion to doing the job he was called to do by the people of the Seventh Kentucky Congressional District. While many congressmen were absent from the floor on junkets or involved in other activities which took them away or monopolized their time, it was very seldom that Carl

⁶⁰"New Chairman Perkins: Powell's Opposite," U.S. News & World Report, 23 January 1967, 14.

⁶¹Drew Pearson, Washington Post, 29 October 1961; cited by Glickman, 7.

⁶²Moritz, 313.

Perkins ever missed a roll call vote in the House. When he was involved with holding hearings for his committee, many times members of the committee did not attend. Perkins always went ahead with the hearing even if he were the only one present. He felt the material was important to him in order to do his job, and therefore he should hear the information presented.

On one occasion in 1967 Perkins had an especially important piece of legislation dealing with the markup of a bill for anti-poverty funds. Not enough members of the committee were present to gain a quorum. He quickly passed the word along that he was going to open the committee meeting to the public and allow it to be televised live. When the cameras arrived the members did too and managed to work out the provisions of the bill in front of the reporters and television cameras.⁶³

This honesty and sheer determination that marked Perkins was ingrained into him by the instruction received from his parents and the code of conduct expected of a man from the mountains of eastern Kentucky. Perkins was able to fight battles for issues only on the basis of their merit in his mind. Dealing was against all he had been reared to believe. This refusal to deal sometimes hampered legislation, but Perkins usually

⁶³Gardner, 74.

managed to overcome that problem through sheer doggedness and determination. In many instances people commented that Perkins simply wore them out in his pressure to gain approval for pet pieces of legislation. As one person put it, "Perkins is a mountaineer and mountaineers are used to adversity. They are used to taking risks and they are used to plugging."⁶⁴

While it may very well have been true that Perkins was a product of the hills of eastern Kentucky where power politics is a fact of life, and all politicians are involved to some extent, that does not mean that corruption necessarily has to be a part of that individual's life. Carl Perkins was proof of the fact that a man could be an immensely successful politician welcoming the support of all areas of the social structure from the miners, to the operators, to the poor and the courthouse crowd, and could still keep his hands clean. Those existed who were critical of Perkins and his machine that steamrolled through the mountains for almost four decades. James Branscome, a director of Save Our Kentucky (SOK), contended,

Perkins depends so much for his support on the power brokers in Eastern Kentucky that he makes Mayor Daley [Richard Daley of Chicago] look small. This is

⁶⁴Glickman, 26.

machine politics without comparison. He is only interested in legislation that sustains him with the machine-controlled people.⁶⁵

Such criticisms may have been accurate in regard to the conduct of political involvement, but it is important to note there was no indication of criticism directed towards Perkins in regard to his honesty. On one occasion Governor Louie Nunn (Republican) vetoed funds intended to support the Office of Economic Opportunity's attempt to establish the Middle Kentucky River Area Development Council. Nunn contended that too much federal money was being channeled into eastern Kentucky and that much of it was being used to benefit the Turner family of Breathitt County who were long-time supporters of Perkins and the most powerful political force in the area.

Perkins requested the governor not to put the entire program in jeopardy by withholding funds but to attempt to inform federal officials of any violation of regulations or laws.⁶⁶ In this entire confrontation Perkins was never accused of misusing his power or influence on behalf of his friends or of benefiting financially in any way from those federal funds in question.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

Carl Perkins was a politician. He learned the game at an early age, and he learned to play it well. As a young man riding a mule up Troublesome Creek speaking to neighbors about his father and seeking their support to elect the elder Perkins to county office, young Carl learned the importance of the handshake and the sympathetic ear. He recognized that the life of a successful politician was one demanding certain agreements and mutual obligations. There were those in positions of power who must be courted. There were demands and expectations that must be fulfilled if the man in public expected to be able to remain there to do his job well. Perkins never forgot that and chose his associates and his commitments very carefully.

Perkins was a man who knew his region and his people and would not allow himself to fall into the trap of losing touch with his constituents. He was a country lawyer who went to Washington and never lost the heritage of the mountains which helped make him what he was. He was a man who walked in the halls of power and interacted daily with men of power. In fact, he himself became a man to be respected because of the power and influence he held, yet he never allowed this power and influence to go to his head. Carl Perkins was a man of the people and a product of the people. Those people remained foremost in his mind and motivated his activities.

No doubt Perkins understood that his political life depended on the votes he could glean from those individuals, but at the same time, the more one looks into his life and examines his career, one is led to believe that he was far more than a vote-hungry politician. Perkins really believed he was helping the people and what he did, whether carrying the trappings of a political position or simply a man trying to do a favor for another man, was still perceived as helping those he was called to represent.

The virtues of the mountain people remained with him when it would have been far easier to have adapted himself to the norm established by those around him. The mountain philosophy that looks down upon the person who tried to act "above their raisin'" dictated to Perkins a denial of the exterior trappings of power. He wore rumpled suits, white socks, and drove an old Ford Falcon that had over 170,000 miles on it when he finally put it into retirement. He retained his nasal twang and the use of mountain slang and colorful statements when he spoke. He never developed the art of public speaking, but he brought the technique of meeting the public on their own ground to a pinnacle.

His simple honesty and integrity with those tasks which demanded his time and effort were traits long respected in the mountains. When a man was placed in a

position of trust, he was expected to function with his utmost ability to fulfill that trust. If he were found lacking, he would lose the confidence and respect of his neighbors. This was something Carl D. Perkins could never allow to happen. The confidence and trust of the people he served was his number one priority. Certainly he was enough of a realist to understand that securing this trust and confidence was the most realistic way to further his own career, but based upon all the information available at this time, one would be forced to conclude this to be a secondary factor in the motivation of the man.

Perkins never desired to climb the political ladder in terms of gaining an office which might offer more prestige and publicity. He was content to be the congressman from the Seventh District of Kentucky and viewed the position as his full-time occupation. Consistently he would advise ambitious young politicians like John F. Kennedy to focus their attention on the House and not to press toward the Senate or the governorship of their home state. This once again reflected the attitude of the mountains. Jobs were so scarce during the early life of Perkins that when a man was fortunate enough to find one, he held on to it and did the best he could to do it right. Someone else was always waiting in the wings eager to take that job from

him if he were negligent or dilatory. Being a congressman was his job, and Perkins did the best he could for as long as he could to make it work.

The honesty of the mountains was also reflected in Perkins driving a hard bargain. The mountain people respect a man who is shrewd in his dealings as long as he can be depended on to honor his commitments. Certainly this was reflected in the way Perkins used his position as chairman of various committees he served over the course of his tenure in the House. Perkins drove a hard bargain doing everything within his power to gain the advantage in the legislative process, especially for the people of his district. Yet when he gave his word or reached an agreement, he could be relied upon to honor that commitment. Even his political enemies respected the fact that he was a tough but honest opponent. They did not enjoy the frequent battles they incurred with him, especially when they challenged entrenched programs he had instigated over the years, but they did not accuse him of a lack of integrity or determination in the fight.

Life in the mountains was hard when Perkins was growing up. He quickly learned that those who were successful were those who were willing to set goals and move toward them with as much dedication and determination as possible. His legislative career reflected this attitude. What he lacked in polish and in organizational

details, respected so much in Washington, he made up for in sheer doggedness and perseverance. One individual remarked that Perkins reminded him of a story he had read in the Bible of a woman who was so persistent in her appeals to a rather tough and crusty judge that he told her he would decide the case in her favor just to keep her from aggravating him all the time. Many would concede Perkins gained passage of a particular piece of legislation simply because he wore the opposition out. He was never content to take "no" for an answer and would devote as many hours as possible and use every tactic available until the opponents would simply give up in sheer frustration.

This same totality of dedication would lead to the health problems which eventually took his life. Mountain people have very little patience with a person who allows a few aches and pains to keep him from doing the job he has been assigned. The traditional picture of a hillbilly as being one who is lazy and shiftless reflects a very small percentage of the mountain people. The norm in the mountains was a devotion to duty and to taking care of one's family that led to many an early grave because individuals pushed themselves too hard with too little time for rest and relaxation. Mrs. Verna Perkins strongly believed this attitude on the part of her husband was a definite factor contributing to his death. Perkins could

never justify a few moments to himself because the task always seemed to stand unfinished before him. It was not a mountain way to stop short of completion.

As Perkins matured, he watched the best and the brightest of the young people of his district leave the mountains in search of more opportunities to develop their futures. Those who remained were caught in the grasp of a single facet economy (coal) in which they were tied to the companies and the markets. In watching this exodus, Perkins became convinced that the key to the problems of his district, and in fact to the problems of the poor and underprivileged of the entire country, lay in legislation concerning education and labor improvements.

It is by examining these topics that one can begin to understand the philosophies and ideals that motivated this mountain congressman. He worked on behalf of labor to gain pay benefits, bargaining power, and safety and disability benefits for the working class of the mountains in order to help them face a brighter future. He lobbied on behalf of mine owners and operators because without their money and influence there would be no mines to provide jobs for the people of the area.

He was not as concerned with the environment because he came from a time in which people considered themselves in a war with the elements around them. The ultimate desire of a person in war is to win the battle,

and this was the goal of the mountain man. If winning the battle to keep bread on his table meant working at a strip mine that ravaged the land, then that was the way it had to be. The mountain would lose, and he would win because he had a job to support his family. If burning coal polluted the atmosphere, it was a price necessary to pay in order to win the battle.

Perkins identified with these people and with all those who were at the bottom looking up and trying to scale the ladder of success one rung at a time. Perhaps it would be true to say he was short-sighted in this respect, but it would be equally true to contend that he was faithful to what he perceived to be the most desperate need for the people of his district.

As much as Perkins worked for labor benefits, his primary objective and greatest love was for education. The exodus of young people from the mountains could be stemmed only if the best and the brightest were provided with the resources necessary to capitalize upon and expand the economic resources of the area. Perkins viewed education as the means by which this would happen. His greatest accomplishments took place in this area as he gained federal funds for elementary and secondary education, for school lunches for underprivileged children, for vocational education to help young men and women prepare themselves for the world of work,

and higher education which would make possible careers in service to the nation and the region.

There can be little debate that the early love for education Perkins received in his home, and the paltry pay he received as a teacher did much to convince him there were many changes needed in the educational system of the mountains and the country. He poured himself into this field with that intensity and devotion already discussed in this chapter.

The results were obvious. Upon his death he had succeeded in pushing through legislation that was landmark in its time. In Senator Pell's Eulogy before the Senate at the death of Congressman Perkins, he stated: "There is not a piece of elementary, secondary, and vocational education that does not bear the imprint of Carl Perkins. All were his children."⁶⁷

In caring for the people of his district Perkins was without equal. It would be safe to say that Carl Perkins got more federal money for his district, on a per-capita basis, than any other man on Capitol Hill.⁶⁸ Certainly the people of the Seventh District respected this because they made him a fixture in Washington for

⁶⁷Congress, Senate, Tribute to Carl D. Perkins, 98th Cong., 2nd sess. Congressional Record (6 August 1984), S9731.

⁶⁸Hunter, 28.

thirty-six years and would have returned him had not death claimed him before the election.

In the words of Senator Pell,

Carl Perkins was a rare individual. He held deep personal convictions that this government should be a positive instrument of help to the less fortunate of our society. But perhaps even more important, he had the talent to translate those convictions into action, and to actually do something for those who were powerless and needed our government's help.⁶⁹

Carl Perkins was not a saint. There were many who were his enemies, some personal and some political. He did not win every time he tried to gain some piece of legislation which was a particular favorite of his. Many rural folk and environmentalists were allied against him in his desire to construct flood control reservoirs in the district which would inundate many scenic areas and valuable farm lands. He lost on several of these issues, but he never wavered from what he perceived to be the need of the people.

If the ultimate tribute to a man can be measured in his willingness to fight for what he believes in and to work with perseverance and dedication toward that goal, then without question Congressman Carl D. Perkins was a successful man.

Following the death of Congressman Perkins many of his colleagues rose in the House and Senate to voice

⁶⁹Tribute to Carl D. Perkins, S9731.

their praise and appreciation for this exceptional individual. Political friend and foe alike praised him for those qualities already enumerated in this chapter. Especially mentioned were his efforts in education, both elementary and secondary, and vocational. For those who would be interested in these speeches, they have been bound as a book entitled Memorial Addresses which is available from the United States Government Printing Office, Washington, District of Columbia.

Most of the statements made by those who worked with Mr. Perkins repeat the same information, but the mere fact there were so many who would take the floor to speak in his memory serves as a great compliment to the country lawyer who left the mountains to serve in Washington but never allowed the values of his mountain heritage to be displaced from his life and work.

CHAPTER 5

THE PRE-CHAIRMANSHIP YEARS, 1948-1967

From the very beginning of his congressional career Carl Perkins was involved with educational issues. During his first year he was appointed to the House Education and Labor Committee and soon became known as one of its hardest working members.¹ There were practically no areas of education Perkins did not support. His background as a teacher and his belief that educational opportunities were part of the solution to the poverty problems of his mountain region led him to sponsor and support all sorts of legislation dealing with this issue. He was instrumental in securing federal aid for the building of libraries in rural areas, for providing lunches for needy children, and for sponsoring vocational education and Title I programs to benefit both elementary and secondary education.

Even though these programs lay outside the perimeters of this paper, they provided an insight into the deep conviction held by Congressman Perkins on education in general. The main thrust of this chapter was an examination of Perkins' contributions to the

¹Charles Moritz, ed., Current Biography 1968 (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1969), 313.

specific field of higher education during those years previous to his appointment as Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee in 1967. During this period there were three major pieces of legislation passed by Congress which directly impacted the field of higher education.

Higher education as a "policy arena" emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Within the Congress, institutional definition was enhanced in 1957 with the creation of the Subcommittee on Education within the House Education and Labor Committee.² Much of the legislation involving higher education was developed in this subcommittee of which Carl D. Perkins was a member.

The passage of the NDEA in 1958 was viewed as the beginning of the modern era of federal student assistance in higher education.³ The Russian announcement of Sputnik spurred Congress and the nation to an effort to provide advanced educational opportunities in order to overcome the gap perceived to exist between American technology and that of the Soviets.

²John T. Wilson, Academic Science, Higher Education, and the Federal Government: 1950-1983 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 44.

³Harold E. Mitzel, ed., Encyclopedia of Educational Research, vol. 2, 5th ed. (New York: Free Press, 1982), s.v. "Financial Aid to Students," by Larry Leslie.

The National Defense Education Act of 1958 affirmed the need to identify and educate more of the Nation's talented young men and women, and to develop programs through which the fullest development of their mental resources and technical skills may be realized.⁴

One of the most important factors incorporated into the NDEA was the directing of benefits toward students rather than institutions. It was an affirmation of the concept that no student of ability would be denied an opportunity for higher education simply because of financial need. This money was to be made available primarily through Title II of the act which initiated the NDSL Program. The stated purpose of this program was to provide long-term, low-interest loans to qualified students who were in need of such financial assistance in order to pursue at least half-time course of study at participating institutions of higher education. Along with the provision of funds there was also incorporated the concept of incentives for students who displayed exceptional academic aptitude and for students who chose to direct their careers teaching at either the elementary, secondary,⁵ or higher education level.⁵

⁴Congress, Senate, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, Subcommittee on Education, Notes and Working Papers Concerning the Administration of Programs, 90th Cong., 1st sess, 1967, Committee Print, p. 144.

⁵Ibid.

When the bill was first introduced on the House floor, it provided for undergraduate scholarships to needy but able students to help them continue their education. In the ensuing debate, these scholarships were killed to be replaced by the NDSL Program. This gradually evolved over the years into what was referred to as the National Direct Student Loan Program. The efforts of Carl D. Perkins to preserve the funding for the NDSL, as well as other higher educational programs during the budget cutting years of the Reagan Administration, served as the impetus for the redesignation of this program as Perkins Loans. Certainly his influence in their preservation and the respect of his colleagues for his labor was reflected in this act.⁶

One of the most important provisions of the NDEA was Title IV which specifically was designed to create new centers of excellence in graduate studies. This law was interpreted to mean a university could not simply reshuffle existing faculty, courses, and programs in order to qualify. The offering had to be something entirely new or greatly expanded in order to qualify for federal fellowships under the NDEA. The result of this

⁶Mrs. Tara Van Curen, Director of Financial Aid, Kentucky Christian College, interview by author, Grayson, Kentucky, 9 November 1989.

legislation was the development of a series of new graduate schools in the South and West. This dramatically altered the distribution of political influence in graduate higher education. No longer did the Northeast dominate this area of scholarship. Many four-year colleges took the opportunity extended to them under the NDEA to upgrade themselves to universities offering graduate programs.⁷

During the first five years more than nine thousand graduate students received fellowship awards totaling \$92 million. New or expanding graduate programs in some 170 different institutions were approved for seven-thousand fellowships under Title IV. Loan funds were established under the act at nearly every college and university in the country. The federal government contributed 90 percent of the loan capital to the institution, and repayments began one year after the completion of studies and continued for a period of ten years.⁸

Perkins became even more involved in higher education legislation under the administration of John F.

⁷Edward S. Gruson, The National Politics of Higher Education (Washington, DC: Sloan Commission on Government and Higher Education, 1977), 53, ERIC, ED 184 410.

⁸Allan M. Cartter, American Universities and Colleges, 9th ed. (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1964), 62.

Kennedy. Kennedy asked for legislation in 1961 which would have established a program of scholarships based on both merit and need and a program of federal loans and matching grants that would have served to support the construction of undergraduate and graduate academic facilities.⁹ Despite intense work on the part of Perkins and other congressional leaders committed to educational support the proposal ran afoul of a coalition of conservative Democrats and Republicans who specifically objected to Kennedy's inclusion of aid to elementary and secondary parochial schools.¹⁰

During this period of time (1961) the House Committee on Education and Labor established for the first time a Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education. It was chaired by Adam Clayton Powell and included Carl Perkins as one of the original members. Members of the subcommittee were carefully chosen, and out of it emerged a bipartisan bloc, generally in favor of federal support of higher education, and having their own political arena in which to work out compromises. This subcommittee was specifically established to study the needs of higher education and to suggest legislative

⁹Gruson, 54.

¹⁰Ibid., 55.

priorities. Higher education finally had its own forum in which its problems could be addressed.¹¹

As a result of the establishment of this subcommittee further legislation affecting higher education was made possible. In December, 1963, the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963 was enacted, establishing a five-year program of grants and loans for the construction of academic facilities for public and private institutions of higher education. The first title of this bill provided funds to public and private colleges and universities and to public community colleges and technical institutes for construction or improvement of facilities which resulted in the expansion or creation of enrollment capacity urgently needed. Title II authorized funds for the construction of facilities for graduate schools and cooperative graduate centers. Title III provided loans to institutions of higher education and to higher education building agencies for the purpose of construction of facilities not to be used for athletics, worship, or medical or dental schools.¹² Representative Perkins was deeply involved in the work at committee level which made the introduction of this bill possible.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Cartter, 63.

The impact of Perkins' involvement in the Higher Education Facilities Act was well attested to in an article published in the Louisville Courier-Journal, August 15, 1963. Perkins was speaking specifically concerning the impact the legislation would have on Kentucky. He was adamant in voicing his support of this federal program since it provided approximately \$3.5 million in aid to his home state. It was Perkins' contention this money would allow the institutions of higher education in Kentucky to close "the gap between what we have been able to do and what we must do in the present and near future." Perkins closed his comments by insisting, "We still have a long way to go, but we have studied what is needed and believe we are moving in the right direction."¹³

It was during the Johnson Administration that Carl Perkins began to receive specific attention for his efforts in regard to funding of higher education. Even though he had worked tirelessly for years and had been among the first wave of support, his work had largely been overshadowed by that of other more notable figures. With Johnson, however, Perkins found a kindred spirit. Mrs. Carl D. Perkins, in commenting on the career of her husband, pointed out that he and President Johnson were

¹³"Perkins Says Colleges Improving," Louisville Courier-Journal, 15 August 1963, 3.

alike in their thinking and in their personal beliefs and educational backgrounds.¹⁴ Perkins became the point man for many of Johnson's Great Society legislative acts, especially in the field of education and poverty.

An increased awareness of the problems of the poor dominated the American political scene during the middle of the decade of the 1960s. President Johnson's Great Society was in full motion pushed along by individuals such as Carl Perkins who spent countless hours lobbying for legislation which provided increased amounts of federal aid to poverty stricken regions of the country. Perkins was credited with being the architect of the Vocational Education Act of 1963. He was aligned solidly behind Johnson in the Economic Opportunity Act and was one of eleven Southern Democrats who voted for the Civil Rights Act of 1964.¹⁵

The Higher Education Act of 1965 was a significant milestone in federal involvement in funding of postsecondary education. This bill formed the foundation for much of the higher education legislation which developed over the next fifteen to twenty years. Perkins was heavily involved in obtaining passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Acts. He, in fact,

¹⁴Mrs. Carl D. Perkins, interview by author, Hindman, Kentucky, 16 August 1989.

¹⁵Moritz, 314.

was credited with having shepherded this bill through Congress.¹⁶ This bill was important not only for its aid to elementary and secondary education, but also because it settled the issues of separation of church and state in education at all levels. It was this emphasis upon equal opportunity which formed the soul of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

It served no useful purpose to attempt to itemize all the issues confronted in this piece of landmark legislation. Copies of the bill are readily available at most libraries. Suffice it to say that the law was a breakthrough in federal student assistance. For the first time federal scholarships were authorized for students coming from low-income families. Students of exceptional financial need were to receive Educational Opportunity Grants. The GSL Program (federally insured with federal assistance subsidies) was originated. The Work-Study Program was transferred to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare from the Office of Economic Opportunity. This Work-Study Program was designed to benefit students from low-income families.¹⁷

Two obvious benefits were made possible by this legislation. First, the government was now bringing

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Gruson, 57.

together programs which had been scattered throughout several different agencies and was harnessing them to provide equal opportunity. Secondly, this new legislation advanced beyond the limits established under the NDEA, which had been tied to merit, in order to provide educational opportunities for the poor and minorities who had been denied these privileges due to low income.

The Higher Education Act of 1965 was basically divided into seven titles. The first provided for matching funds for community service programs in the fields of government, poverty, and health. The second title was designated for funds to assist in the development and upgrading of library holdings, facilities, and research programs. Title III was to provide funds to strengthen developing institutions. The main thrust of this area was to help colleges that dealt specifically with the educational needs of minorities. Title IV dealt with the financial assistance available to students such as grants, loans, and work-study arrangements. Title V provided grants to aid in the development of new programs to benefit teachers such as fellowships, institutional assistance grants, and the establishment of a national teachers' corps to reach out to the needs of the underprivileged through tutoring, remedial work, and other related educational activities.

Title VI provided funds for the improvement of undergraduate instruction especially in the field of closed circuit television equipment. Title VII discussed amendments to the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963.¹⁸

As Chairman of the General Education Subcommittee of the House Education and Labor Committee, a post which he assumed in 1963, Perkins was on the cutting edge of this legislation involving increased federal funding to higher education. Even though his main interest lay in elementary and secondary education and vocational education, Perkins was definitely concerned about the needs of the postsecondary area as well.

In January of 1967, Carl Perkins was appointed to fill the position of Chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor after Adam Clayton Powell was stripped of his assignment by a caucus of Democratic congressmen. Powell was accused of having mismanaged his staff and travel funds. As the second-ranking member of the committee, Perkins was designated committee chairman in a resolution introduced by Morris K. Udall of Arizona which passed by voice vote. The replacement of Powell by Perkins marked the first time since 1925 that a House

¹⁸Notes and Working Papers, 2-4.

committee chairman was removed from office and stripped of his seniority.¹⁹

Perkins' elevation to Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee marked a new phase in his career and placed him even more firmly into the fight for educational involvement on the part of the government. With the fall of Johnson from popularity because of the Viet Nam War crises, the role of Perkins became an attempt to keep those programs funded which had already been passed. The years of the Republican administrations of Nixon and Reagan tested his political ability and forced him to spend much time and effort in attempting to shore up the structure of federal aid erected during the glory days of the Great Society when public consciousness about poverty and race allowed for unprecedented amounts of federal dollars to be poured into higher education.

¹⁹Moritz, 314.

CHAPTER 6

THE CHAIRMANSHIP YEARS, 1967-1983

When Carl D. Perkins replaced Adam Clayton Powell as Chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor, his impact upon higher education legislation became more pronounced. During those years he had served as a member of the committee and had chaired the Subcommittee on Education, and he had great impact upon the drafting of any legislation which affected the postsecondary area. While he served as the man behind the scenes during Powell's tenure as chairman, he was responsible for leading the fight to secure passage of numerous bills which had an impact on higher education. Many times Powell got the credit for work regarding a particular bill when in reality it was Perkins operating behind the scenes that brought success. Much of this effort was not preserved in any written form simply because it was conducted in private sessions in which political favors were given and received and "arms twisted" in regard to votes on particular issues. This behind-the-scenes activity was chronicled in the eulogies presented on the floor of Congress following Congressman Perkins' death. Accounts were given which tell of his taking members by the arm and leading them

aside to bargain with the assurance, as he put it in his own words, "we are a'gonna get a bill." There were, in fact, many who contended that this was the most productive period in the career of Carl Perkins. He seemed to be at his best laboring behind the scenes, dealing with members during lunch or backing them into a corner in the cloakroom or calling them after hours while he was still at his desk.

Certainly the passage of the Higher Education Act of 1965 ranked as a sterling example of this behind-the-scenes commitment on the part of Perkins. Even though Powell was chairman of the committee, it was Perkins doing the legwork and calling in the votes that helped make passage possible. It was suggested that the Higher Education Act of 1965 was the most important single piece of legislation in this field since the Morrill Act. Certainly the work Perkins did to make sure the provisions of the bill were extended was viewed as one of his most significant accomplishments.

Even though his behind-the-scenes work was substantial, there was no doubt his effect following his appointment was even more significant. This was true for the simple fact there was no legislation originating in the House that did not come through his committee, and there was certainly no legislation involving funding of

higher education that did not have his mark upon it because all bills dealing with matters of revenue and spending must originate in the House of Representatives. His position as Chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor meant that every bill introduced on the floor of the House of Representatives from 1967-1983 bore the distinct imprint of Carl D. Perkins. Perkins was the man who set up the various subcommittees and served on all of them as an ex officio member.¹ He was responsible for calling all hearings on the bills, and for making certain through all the power he possessed as chairman that the various subcommittees worked toward producing a bill which met the criteria expected by the House and the administration, especially during the last years of the Johnson Administration. As was pointed out in the biographical chapter of this paper, this often proved to be a difficult and frustrating task because of the composition of the committee, but Perkins was able to put his mark upon their work through his tenacity and perseverance.

Even though the Perkins' personal papers will not be open to the public for another ten to fifteen years, it was still possible to make a very good case for his impact on higher education funding by examining all those

¹Congressional Directory, 98th Cong. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1984), 317-18.

bills enacted as legislation during his term as Chairman of the Education and Labor Committee. Even though Perkins made few speeches (he never considered speechmaking to be one of his strong points), and even though, at that time, there were very few specific sources available to chronicle his actions on behalf of these bills, the very fact they came out of his committee and were eventually enacted into law or retained as law was an unmistakable reflection upon Perkins' influence and direction. Very simply put, if Perkins were not in favor of a certain piece of legislation, it was never reported out of committee. It therefore never had an opportunity to be acted upon by the House and never became law. If it were reported out, if it were acted upon, if it became law, then it was to some extent a result of the influence of Carl D. Perkins acting as the chairman of the committee.

One of the first pieces of legislation to originate under the tenure of Perkins as Chairman of the Education and Labor Committee was the Education Professions Development Act of 1967. This act was designed to help train persons who served, or were preparing to serve, as teachers, administrators, or educational specialists in institutions of higher education. The funds provided in this act were used to conduct and establish fellowships or set up training

programs directed mainly toward community colleges or the needs of the disadvantaged.² Since this bill was voted into law in the month Perkins was named chairman, it was probable that much of the behind-the-scenes work was a product of his effort. The first funding of these fellowships, institutes, and special projects did not take place under Part E of this act until January of 1969, which was two years after Perkins assumed the role of chairman, indicating his strong support for the provisions of the bill.

A general consensus among those who worked with Perkins was that his efforts in securing passage of the landmark Education Amendments of 1972 marked one of his most significant accomplishments. When President Nixon signed the Higher Education Act of 1972 on June 23, it made provision for establishing more direct federal aid to students than to the institutions they attended. Emerging from this legislation was the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG, later to become known as Pell Grants after Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island who headed the Senate Education subcommittee). These BEOG funds were basically earmarked for undergraduates and

²J. Wayne Reitz, Part E: Education Professions Development Act of 1967 (n.p., 1969), 1, ERIC, ED 028 718.

were patterned after the G.I. Bill which helped so many veterans after World War II.³

The enactment of this bill was made possible through efforts of Carl Perkins and Senator Pell. There were significant differences in the bill when it emerged from the House and Senate committees. It looked as though there was very little chance of any compromise being worked out between the two. Weeks of bargaining had produced no clear-cut compromise. At this point Perkins, who chaired the conference attempting to find a compromise upon which both Houses could agree, determined to keep the group together for as long as it took to reach an agreement. On May 17 after an all-night session, a compromise was reached that succeeded not only in resolving scores of higher education issues and such complex questions as the format of a two-billion-dollar aid program for desegregating school districts, but also in reaching accord on what had become the most politically difficult issue of all: busing.⁴

This omnibus law addressed many issues relating to the entire spectrum of education, but the two issues which impacted most upon higher education were those dealing with direct aid to students and support for the

³Eric Wentworth, "No Silver Spoons for Higher Education," Saturday Review, 22 July 1972, 38.

⁴Ibid.

private and public colleges which were caught between inflationary cost increases and lagging revenues. Many of these colleges were to the point of having to price themselves out of existence if tuition were increased to the point of balancing the effects of inflation.

Perkins, Pell, and the other lawmakers who comprised the conference succeeded in helping to address both problems by making aid available directly to the student which then allowed them to choose the college or university they desired to attend. These compromises served to reinforce the fundamental concept which the lawmakers were attempting to establish, the idea that college students should be served ahead of their institutions. The legislators emphasized the idea that the role of the federal government was to equalize educational opportunities and to that end it subsidized students in proportion to their needs. Secondly, the government subsidized schools to the extent they furthered equal opportunities by enrolling federally aided students.⁵ The number of students who were eligible was increased to include not only those from low-income families, but also students from middle-income groups who were finding educational expenses increasingly hard to meet. The prime factor in allowing this

⁵Eric Wentworth, "The Higher Education Act--and Beyond," Change, September 1972, 10.

legislation to pass was the fact the student's entitlement assured him of federal assistance regardless of which college he attended, and regardless of the state in which the college he attended was located.⁶

There were other significant issues addressed in this legislation as well. Various out-of-date student aid programs were also extended and expanded under the 1972 act. Educational opportunity grants, which became supplements to the basic grants; the college work-study program, which provided funds to pay students for part-time jobs on or off campus; and the direct low-interest loans originally established by the 1958 NDEA were all continued. These programs were revised so that they no longer were clearly targeted on students from poor families who were presumably "covered" by BEOG's.⁷ The law also authorized funds for federal grants to support reforms and innovations in higher education which was a high priority item for the Nixon Administration.⁸

Aside from these new programs, the legislation extended and in some cases expanded a considerable list of old programs. These included aid for college

⁶Wentworth, "No Silver Spoons," 38.

⁷Robert W. Hartman, "The Nixon Budget," Change, April 1973, 11.

⁸Wentworth, "No Silver Spoons," 38.

libraries, for campus construction projects, for instructional equipment, for teacher training and retraining, for community services, for special projects to help disadvantaged students, and for strengthening "developing institutions" which in most cases were black colleges which were hard-pressed for money.⁹

There was little doubt this legislation which depended so much upon the efforts of Carl D. Perkins had a tremendous effect upon higher education. It helped ease the budget drain on colleges which provided student aid money out of their own resources. It made possible the raising of tuition to increase revenues without pricing themselves out of existence, and it helped expand enrollment so that vacancies were filled where there was a surplus of seats.

This legislation was not achieved without a tremendous political fight which pitted Congresswoman Edith Green against Senator Pell and Representative John Brademas. Green had been higher education's "representative" on the hill for years. She was a firm believer in meritocracy, and was in favor of removing any obstacles which stood in the way of students with proven ability gaining a higher education. Green wanted more than anything else to provide relief for colleges

⁹Ibid., 39.

and universities from their "financial crisis." She tried to gain passage of a bill which distributed general institutional aid among the diverse elements of higher education. This disturbed the administration because of the financial implications. In response to Green's proposals the administration offered a cost-of-instruction allowance as a compromise. Several senators and representatives formed a coalition to support this effort. Eventually Green made an intemperate speech on the floor of the House in which she accused her fellow conferees of being disloyal to the House version of the bill. This action infuriated Chairman Perkins who then used his influence to gain support for the cost-of-instruction allowances. Perkins also put pressure on the higher education associations who had previously backed Green by letting them know this was probably the best bill they could expect. The associations chose to abandon their former champion and support the bill. As a result of the influence of Perkins, Congresswoman Green lost a great deal of her influence, and Senator Pell and Congressman Brademas won the victory they had fought the political battles to achieve.¹⁰

¹⁰Edward S. Gruson, The National Politics of Higher Education (Washington, DC: Sloan Commission on Government and Higher Education, 1977), 53, ERIC, ED 184 410.

In a written interview Jack Jennings, a close associate of Congressman Perkins, contended that Perkins' work in securing an agreement in this legislation was one of his most significant accomplishments in the field of higher education legislation. Jennings stated,

In a very contentious House-Senate conference committee on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act the committee could have easily dissolved without agreement because of the extent of different viewpoints. Since he [Perkins] did force an agreement by keeping the conference in session until 6:00 A.M. the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant program (now called the Pell Grant) was created and funded.¹¹

The 93rd Congress (1973-1974) provided very fertile ground for Carl Perkins. During that period he sponsored or cosponsored twenty-three different bills and/or resolutions which directly or indirectly related to higher education.¹²

In February Perkins sponsored, and his committee reported a joint resolution to amend the Education Amendments of 1972 to extend the authorization of the National Commission on the Financing of Postsecondary Education and extended the length of time involved in carrying out the provisions of the Education Amendments

¹¹Jack Jennings, Associate General Counsel, Committee on Education and Labor, interview by author, Washington, DC, 16 October 1989.

¹²Bills introduced in the House of Representatives have only one sponsor, but may have many cosponsors; therefore, the designations sponsor and cosponsor must be used.

of 1972.¹³ A second resolution was sponsored by Perkins in June of 1973 which attempted to establish a national education policy. This policy declared that every citizen is entitled to an education from nursery through graduate school without financial barriers and limited only by the desire to learn, and the ability to absorb such education.¹⁴ Perkins had more success with a bill addressing amendments for elementary and secondary education. HR69 was designed specifically to provide benefits for elementary and secondary education, but included in the provisions of the bill under Title VII was an authorization for the commissioner to enter into contracts with institutions of higher education for the preparation, production, evaluation, and distribution for use on public educational television stations of courses for elementary school teachers who were, or intended to be, reading teachers. This measure was passed into law on August 21, 1974.¹⁵

In November of 1974 Perkins, among others, cosponsored a bill introduced by James G. O'Hara from

¹³House, Joint Resolution to Amend the Education Amendments of 1972, 93rd Cong., 1973. H.J.Res. 393.

¹⁴Education Amendments of 1972; House, Joint Resolution Proposing a National Education Policy, 93rd Cong., 1973. H.J.Res. 600.

¹⁵House, A Bill to Extend and Amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, 93rd Cong., 1973. H.R. 69.

Michigan to establish the Harry S. Truman Memorial Scholarship Program. This bill impacted funding for higher education in that scholarships were made available which specifically targeted young Americans who desired to pursue careers in public service. The House bill was laid on the table, but the impact of Perkins and those associated with him in the sponsorship of this bill was felt when a Senate bill addressing the same issue was passed in lieu of the measure presented by the House.¹⁶

In addition to these bills either sponsored or cosponsored by Perkins which were enacted into law as a result of his efforts in the 93rd Congress, there were over twenty other pieces of legislation directly related to some form of educational assistance ranging from school lunch programs through vocational education and various attempts to help students through "forgiveness" of loan payments if they chose to enter education as a career. All of these bills were reported to various committees for further review and were not acted upon by the House during the sessions of the 93rd Congress. Even though many of these proposals never became law they, nevertheless, stood as ample evidence concerning Perkins' interest in the entire panorama of education activity.

¹⁶House, A Bill to Establish the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Program, 93rd Cong., 1974. H.R. 17481.

The 94th Congress (1975-1976) did not prove to be as productive for Perkins in his higher education legislation. Twenty-two separate bills were either sponsored or cosponsored by Perkins, but only one of them was enacted into law. This legislation amended the Higher Education Act of 1965 relative to the reallocation of work-study funds. Its basic emphasis was in making certain that sums granted to an eligible institution for work-study programs which were not needed during that fiscal year should remain available to the Commissioner of Education for redistribution within the same state throughout the succeeding fiscal year for such purposes.¹⁷ Most were referred to various committees, and a few were even reported to the House from committee with various amendments, but none were voted on during that session. Once again the diversity of Perkins' interest in education was displayed as he proposed bills which set aside funds for higher education activity in the training of persons to work in the coal industry, especially in the fields of production, conversion, utilization, conservation, and related activities. Perkins was extremely interested in vocational education, but this bill set aside five universities which established better undergraduate and graduate programs

¹⁷House, A Bill to Amend the Higher Education Act of 1965, 94th Cong., 1975. H.R. 4221.

focusing or dealing with coal as a major national energy source.¹⁸ In addition to this specialized legislation Perkins promoted a bill to extend and amend the Higher Education Act of 1965. The basis of this bill was to extend the authority of the Commissioner of Education to make grants to eligible students and extend the authorization of appropriations for the specified provisions of the act. Provisions were also included which provided penalties for students who misapplied or fraudulently used loans, and increased the amount of funds an institution could receive to cover the administrative costs of the student loan programs.¹⁹

An interesting sidelight to Perkins' involvement with higher education came in 1976, not in regard to legislation he sponsored, but in legislation he fought to preserve. The Nixon Administration had waged a battle since 1972 to terminate two major "campus based" student aid programs. The target of these attacks were the NDSL's which had provided low-interest college loans for needy students since 1958, and the SEOG Program.²⁰

¹⁸House, A Bill to Amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 for the Education of Persons, 94th Cong., 1975. H.R. 1357.

¹⁹House, A Bill to Extend and Amend the Higher Education Act of 1965, 94th Cong., 1976. H.R. 12851.

²⁰Charles B. Saunders, "The Student Aid Merry-Go-Round," Change, August 1976, 44.

Perkins took a very active part in defending these programs since every piece of educational legislation was viewed by him as essential to the success of the country. His efforts, along with others who supported the legislation were successful, as planning for the 1978 budget cycle dismissed the administration policy and reaffirmed the tried and proven method which had been successful over the past years.²¹

The 95th Congress (1977-1978) was very receptive to legislation which affected higher education and once again Congressman Perkins was involved in either sponsoring or cosponsoring these pieces of legislation. In November of 1977 Perkins was one of the cosponsors of a joint resolution authorizing the President to call a White House Conference on the Arts. As a provision of this resolution which was enacted into law in May, 1978, Title III authorized the President to call and conduct a White House Conference on Education in 1980 to assess the condition, needs, and goals of education.²²

One of the most far-reaching pieces of legislation passed during this Congress was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act sponsored by

²¹Ibid., 45.

²²House, Joint Resolution to Authorize the President to Call a White House Conference on the Arts, 95th Cong., 1977. H.J.Res. 649.

Perkins. This bill, while specifically targeted for elementary and secondary education, provided a significant impact upon higher education as well. Funds were made available to certain institutions of higher education to provide studies on consumer education, environmental issues, criminal behavior and to encourage underprivileged students to pursue postsecondary education for the biomedical sciences.²³

Perkins also cosponsored, along with several others, a bill sponsored by Gerald R. Ford to make technical amendments to provisions relating to higher education contained in the Education Amendment of 1976. This bill touched on many miscellaneous items but basically established criteria to be used by states in applying for basic grants, especially when full appropriations were not available. It also dealt with provisions for loan limitations for first-year students and permitted funds available for academic facility reconstruction or renovation to be used without regard to whether such funds increased or created enrollment capacity, health care capacity, or continuing education programs.²⁴

²³House, A Bill to Extend for Five Years Certain Education Programs, 95th Cong., 1977. H.R. 15.

²⁴House, A Bill to Make Certain Technical Miscellaneous Amendments to the Education Amendment of 1976, 95th Cong., 1977. H.R. 6774.

Perkins cosponsored another interesting piece of legislation passed into law in August of 1978. This bill amended the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Education Act, the Higher Education Act of 1965, and the G.I. Bill Improvement Act of 1977 by allowing institutions of higher education who were participating in these rehabilitation programs to receive established funds even if their enrollment fell short of the criterion established as long as the institutions proved they were making reasonable efforts to promote students and to provide the required services.²⁵

Perkins cosponsored another bill introduced by Gerald Ford which would have amended Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to increase the availability of assistance to middle-income students. While this legislation did not result in a bill originating in the House, the measure did impact higher education since a Senate bill dealing with the same issue was passed in its place.²⁶

Once again it should be noted there were twenty-nine other pieces of legislation dealing with some area of education which was either directly sponsored by

²⁵House, A Bill to Amend the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Education Act, 95th Cong., 1978. H.R. 10569.

²⁶House, A Bill to Amend Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, 95th Cong., 1978. H.R. 11274.

or cosponsored by Carl Perkins. Many of these proposed bills were referred to various committees while others were laid on the table. Not all of them impacted higher education, but they once again served to paint a picture of a legislator firmly committed to the educational program of the country.

The year 1979 proved to be a very important year for Perkins. President Carter proposed budget cuts which were the greatest since the days of the Nixon Administration. Many of these cuts were directed toward programs which Perkins had labored to create over the years. In fact, according to an article appearing in the Louisville Courier-Journal, February 13, 1979, cuts shaved 12 percent off the programs under Perkins' committee while only a 3.6 percent reduction was suggested for the entire budget.²⁷

During this period the Education and Labor Committee was losing much of the glamor it had accumulated over the years. In previous congressional committee assignments it had been one of the most requested among legislators. As the 96th Congress (1979-1980) was called into session, however, the glamor had switched from Education and Labor to Interstate and Foreign Commerce and,

²⁷Howard Fineman, "Budget Crunch Hitting Home for Kentucky's Rep. Perkins," Louisville Courier-Journal, 13 February 1979, A1.

especially, the Budget Committee. The Education and Labor Committee was forced to drop the number of Democratic voting seats from twenty-four to twenty-three since there was no Democratic congressman who wanted to fill that vacant position. In contrast the Budget Committee had thirty-three applicants for seven seats.²⁸

This trend indicated many congressional leaders were anticipating the end of hammering out new programs and were instead focusing on those areas where the funds would be appropriated to actually enable them to work. Perkins himself gave some indication of his acceptance of the political reality of the situation by agreeing to testify before the Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee which oversaw the budgets of the programs Perkins' committee had created. This was the first time since 1973 Perkins had agreed to testify in this fashion. Part of this had to do with a Kentucky colleague, William H. Natcher, becoming chairman of that subcommittee, and also the recognition that appropriations would become vital in helping to continue the direction his committee had established over the years.²⁹

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

Perkins was reaching a pinnacle of personal power in 1979, even though his committee was on the wane. At that time he was tied for third in seniority in the House. Perkins determined to use all of this personal clout to limit the effectiveness of Carter in budget cuts. Taking his case to the people, Perkins was very critical of Carter's huge budget requests for foreign aid while cutting back on services to the people of this country.³⁰ Perkins was very frustrated since it was a Democratic president who was creating these funding problems, especially since he had been fighting a running battle since 1968 with the Nixon Administration over program cuts and direction.

Perhaps no piece of legislation served to illustrate the power of Carl Perkins and his commitment to higher education more clearly than that of the education amendments of 1980. Despite the proposed cuts in funding Perkins was able to secure passage of House Bill HR5192 which amended and extended the Higher Education Act of 1965. This legislation was introduced by Representative William D. Ford and cosponsored by Perkins and others in September of 1979. After a long and complicated series of maneuvers and amendments, combined with serious negotiations toward a compromise between the House and

³⁰Frank Brown, "Perkins Criticizes Carter's Spending," Ashland Daily Independent, 1 April 1979, B1.

Senate, the bill became law in October of 1980.³¹ The political infighting and trade-offs that marked the eventual passage of this legislation were considered by those close to Perkins as another of his political coups.³² There can be little doubt, that given the predisposition of the time toward budget cutting, the passage of this bill was a monumental victory for Perkins in his attempt to retain and strengthen the commitment of the nation in education in general and higher education in particular.

It was outside the scope of this paper to go into great detail concerning all the provisions of this important legislation. It consisted of thirteen separate titles dealing with such issues as: continuing education programs and planning, library assistance, research and training, institutional aid, student assistance, teacher training, international education programs, facilities construction and renovation, cooperative education, graduate programs, improvement of postsecondary education, urban grant university programs, and general and miscellaneous provisions. Grants were also awarded to students. These grants included Pell Grants, Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants, State Student

³¹House, A Bill to Amend and Extend the Higher Education Act of 1965, 96th Cong., 1979. H.R. 5192.

³²Jennings, 16 October 1989.

Incentive Grants, TRIO--special programs for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, special programs for students whose families were engaged in migrant and seasonal farm work, and veterans' cost-of-instruction payments.³³ Additionally, GSL's were covered. Eligibility criteria and administrative allowances for aid recipients were addressed. Also presented was information on 1981-1985 authorization levels for the legislation by section.³⁴

This comprehensive legislative package covered thirty pages in digested form so it is easy to see just how far-reaching its provisions were. Much of the current federal aid to higher education has its foundation in this bill which was cosponsored by Carl Perkins.

Other important actions by Perkins during the 96th Congress concerned his cosponsorship, along with a host of others, of a bill sponsored by Representative Jack B. Brooks to organize a Department of Education which transferred measures dealing with education from other cabinet arenas and placed them under the oversight of the Secretary of Education. This bill was laid on the table

³³TRIO represents three programs for the disadvantaged: Upward Bound, Student Support Service, and Talent Search.

³⁴Peter J. Gossens and Joan M. Griffin, The Education Amendments of 1980, Summary Analysis (Washington, DC: National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, 1980), 1, ERIC, ED 196 364.

in the House which then proceeded to pass the Senate measure in lieu of that particular proposal.³⁵ Perkins also sponsored a bill which allowed G.I. Bill education benefits to be used at any time rather than only within a ten year period of eligibility. This measure was referred to the House Committee on Veterans Affairs.³⁶

Looking back at the budget proposals of 1989 the ability of Perkins and other interested legislators to accomplish what they did for higher education was an amazing achievement. The leaders of higher education, along with congressional supporters, managed to take a proposed cut in funding for middle-income students and limit its drastic reductions to a more manageable level. As a result of pressure applied from outside groups interested in education and legislators such as Perkins, the administration increased its basic grants allocation by \$1.2 billion to a total of \$2.5 billion and raised the mark for supplemental grants from \$270 million to \$340 million.³⁷

³⁵House, A Bill to Establish a Department of Education, 96th Cong., 1979. H.R. 2444.

³⁶House, A Bill to Amend Title 38, 96th Cong., 1979. H.R. 3226.

³⁷William McNamara, "Cold Comfort from the White House," Change, March 1979, 22.

The Reagan Administration, which took office in 1981, provided Carl Perkins with the challenge that dominated the rest of his life. Perkins complained that he had never experienced anything like the pressure being placed upon him to make cuts in the programs sponsored by the Education and Labor Committee. Of the thirty-six-billion dollars that was to be whittled from the nation's 1982 spending plans, a third came out of these areas Perkins had labored to create and fund over his three decades of service in Washington. Perkins used his colorful style to state, "We are meeting with a gun pointed at our heads," as he described the intense pressure under which his committee labored trying to find the least destructive and painful way possible to cut twelve billion dollars from his pet programs.³⁸

At this point in his career Perkins was becoming somewhat of a national symbol--the embodiment of what little outspoken opposition there was to the passion for cutting social expenditures which marked the early days of the Reagan Administration. Even though Perkins was, by his own admission, tired of the grind, he was still determined to limit to the best of his ability what he perceived as disaster. In the words of Mike Brown, writing for the Louisville Courier-Journal,

³⁸Mike Brown, "A Tired Perkins Bemoans 'Inhuman' Cuts," Louisville Courier-Journal, 22 June 1981, A1.

The Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, the Public Broadcasting Service--have all lately discovered this slow-talking country fellow whose slightly rumpled presence masks a quiet but unrelenting tenacity.³⁹

Brown went on to write,

Even Ronald Reagan paid a kind of backhanded tribute in his press conference . . . as he claimed that some were engaging in 'unconscionable' sleight of hand, appearing to be cutting spending when they really weren't.⁴⁰

One example that was cited concerned an unnamed committee (Perkins' Education and Welfare Committee) that had eliminated suppers for day care, but then turned around and changed the law so lunches could be served at suppertime.⁴¹

Perkins at first considered a strategy aimed at preserving less attractive programs and cutting funds from the most popular programs, such as Head Start and student loans, depending on public outrage and citizen pressure to force them back to full funding in the budget "reconciliation" meetings on the floor of the House. Eventually Perkins abandoned this tactic because of a fear it might backfire, either by the budget going through unchanged or by the Republicans pushing through their own proposals. Eventually the decision was made

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

to place the greatest funding on these most widely appreciated programs and to reduce funds to less visible programs. The importance, of course, to higher education was in the increased allotment called for in funds for student loans; and to a lesser degree, special "impact" aid to education.⁴²

In order to preserve his programs Perkins was not above challenging the entire congressional budget-making process. Perkins argued that the procedure under which the budget must be constructed imposed inflexible ceilings that did not permit proper input from other members of the House and Senate, and usurped the authorization of all standing committees.⁴³ Perkins attempted to persuade congressional leaders to allow his committee to offer amendments to the budget bill which would lessen the effect of the budget cuts.⁴⁴

In the Personnel and Guidance Journal of June, 1982, Perkins published an article entitled "The Case for Political Action: A Congressional Perspective." In this article Perkins lamented the problems experienced by the educational and social services because of the

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Pamela Glass, "Perkins Seeking Amendments to Lessen Budget Cut Effects," Ashland Daily Independent, 21 May 1981, 2.

⁴⁴Ibid.

budget cuts imposed by the administration on the 97th Congress. In trying to save these programs Perkins adopted the tactic of placing the blame on the new legislative tools forged as a means of bulldozing changes through the legislative process. He pointed out the way in which a coalition of Republicans and conservative Democrats pushed through a budget plan which placed severe restrictions on the "reconciliation" process which allowed committees to make changes in legislation to "reconcile" spending with the levels called for in the budget resolution.

Perkins contended this was bad for several reasons among which are the following:

1. He said it required the budget to be established in too much haste without giving the public adequate time to know the issues.
2. He argued it diminished the role the committees played and threw the deciding weight behind the Budget Committee and the coalition controlling the floor of the House.
3. He felt the attention given to important issues, especially relating to education, would be diminished and many important measures would be handled by floor vote rather than through the traditional give and take of the committee system. He used the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act as an example. According to Perkins a major rewrite of fifteen years worth of education programs was attached to a funding bill without one day of hearings on the specific educational block grant proposal that was ultimately approved.
4. He also contended the result of such budgetary restrictions would be an evolvment of omnibus bills which would have numerous amendments

attached to the few pieces of legislation that were moving, which were generally budget bills. He argued the creation of such omnibus bills diminished the opportunity for input from outside groups, and that poorly drafted bills would slip through.

In summary, he concluded the new legislative strategy as tested in 1981 severely limited the opportunities for meaningful political action by counselors.⁴⁵

Perkins did not feel confident he would be able to hold the line against the pressure exerted by the administration, but nevertheless proposed, or cosponsored, twelve pieces of legislation in the 97th Congress (1981-1982) which directly were aimed at assisting higher education in one area or another. Out of these proposed pieces of legislation only two were actually voted into law, and one of these affected higher education only indirectly. Perkins cosponsored, along with a host of others, a measure brought before the House by Representative Augustus F. Hawkins which established a community public-private training and employment assistance system, along with employment and training services. This legislation impacted higher education in the sense that it provided some funds be made available

⁴⁵Carl D. Perkins, "The Case for Political Action: A Congressional Perspective," Personnel and Guidance Journal (June 1982): 582-84.

to help train students in certain areas in order to attain competency in their occupations.⁴⁶

The second bill was very important to higher education because it dealt specifically with funds available to students under Pell Grants. The measure was introduced by Representative Paul M. Simon and was cosponsored by Perkins and others. The bill specifically called for limits on the amount a student received from Pell Grants, and made available thirty-million dollars in Pell Grant appropriations for the purpose of restoring eligibility for Pell Grants for individuals adversely affected by a modification of the family contribution schedule with respect to the treatment of veterans' education benefits.⁴⁷

The very fact there was so little legislation proposed, and even less actually passed during the 97th Congress, gave credibility to Perkins' assertion that budgetary rules adversely affected the amount of legislation handled by Congress each session. To some, that was not a problem, since many individuals believed Congress enacted too many pieces of legislation.

⁴⁶House, A Bill to Establish a Community Public-Private Training and Employment Assistance System, 97th Cong., 1982. H.R. 5320.

⁴⁷House, A Bill to Require a Separate Family Contribution Schedule for Pell Grants, 97th Cong., 1982. H.R. 7048.

But to Perkins, whose political career had been devoted to hammering out legislative packages through the "give and take" of the system, it seemed a tragic problem.

This demanded that Perkins spend the few months left of his life fighting battles for preservation of present programs and their funding as opposed to creating new ones to bring further educational and employment opportunities to his district and the country as a whole.

As the 98th Congress (1983-1984) convened, Perkins renewed his fight for educational programs. By this time the constant struggle and long hours were taking a definite toll on Perkins' health. In an interview conducted on August 6, 1989, Mrs. Carl Perkins revealed that her husband's health had not been good for several months. She indicated, however, he believed there was too much at stake in his fight against the proposed program funding cuts by the Reagan Administration to try to slack off in his efforts. The tenacity that marked his career from the beginning continued to drive him to the very end.

In January of 1983 Perkins launched a movement to create support for federal legislation designed to address a shortage of mathematics and science teachers in the elementary and secondary schools of the nation. A similar bill had been placed before the 97th Congress

and failed, but Perkins was determined to gain some legislation in this area. In an interview with the Ashland Daily Independent on January 4, 1983, Perkins reported that hearings held by his Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education Subcommittee during 1982 showed that forty-two states were short of physics teachers, and forty-three were short of mathematics teachers. He also contended there had been a 70 percent drop in the past ten years nationally of high school teachers prepared to teach mathematics and science at the high school level.⁴⁸

To combat this problem Perkins proposed to introduce legislation which would, among other measures, provide congressional scholarships for college undergraduates planning to teach mathematics and science, and for elementary and secondary teachers seeking to become certified in these areas. Perkins stated that the bill would amend the NDEA which he had cosponsored in 1958 after Russia orbited Sputnik.⁴⁹ Such glaring discrepancies in the educational arena provided a direct challenge to Perkins to attempt to find solutions which encouraged students to choose teaching as

⁴⁸Paul Gottbrath, "Perkins Introduces Bill to Aid Math, Science Instruction," Ashland Daily Independent, 4 January 1983.

⁴⁹Ibid.

a vocation. Perkins did introduce this bill on January 1, 1983, but it had not passed at the time of his death.⁵⁰

Perkins did not relent in his pressure on this area. In late January, 1983, the Louisville Courier-Journal recorded that Perkins was still pushing for more mathematics and science preparation by college undergraduates. He quoted a statistic which revealed that in 1981 all the colleges and universities in the state of New York graduated only thirty-two students who went on to teach mathematics and science.⁵¹

Using statistics such as these for leverage, Perkins introduced two more bills in February of 1983 designed to provide assistance in the mathematics and science areas. In this attempt Perkins emerged successful. Both bills were combined into the Emergency Mathematics and Science Education and Jobs Act: National Engineering and Science Personnel and Jobs Creation Act of 1983. This comprehensive piece of legislation provided assistance to improve elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education in mathematics and science; to provide a national policy for engineering, technical, and

⁵⁰House, A Bill to Provide Assistance to Improve Elementary, Secondary, and Postsecondary Education in Mathematics and Science, 98th Cong., 1983. H.R. 30.

⁵¹Mike King, "Perkins Pushes for More Math, Science," Louisville Courier-Journal, 27 January 1983, 1.

scientific personnel; and to provide for cost-sharing by the private sector in training such personnel.⁵²

Higher education was specifically affected by this legislation in a number of ways. Congressional scholarships were made available for students who planned to major in mathematics, science, or engineering at colleges and universities. The legislation established faculty exchange programs between institutions of higher education. It set aside funds for higher education institutions through the state educational agency, and provided for grants to colleges and universities for instruction in critical foreign languages.⁵³

This successful legislative drive by Perkins was viewed as prophetic of the times to come in education legislation. Even though Perkins did not live to see it, the efforts of others who shared his concerns for the educational programs of the country eventually had their effect on the Reagan Administration. The Chronicle of Higher Education reported in February, 1988, "President Reagan abandoned his seven year effort to make drastic reductions in federal spending on education, recommending

⁵²House, A Bill to Provide Assistance to Improve Elementary, Secondary, and Postsecondary Education in Mathematics and Science, 98th Cong., 1983. H.R. 1310.

⁵³Ibid.

record high amounts for programs aiding colleges and students."⁵⁴

Another success for Perkins in the 98th Congress concerned a bill sponsored by Representative Paul Simon and cosponsored by Perkins. This bill which became law only a few days following the death of Perkins provided authority for the consolidation of student loans and in allowing increased cost allowances for students who commuted to their respective institutions of higher education. It also placed new regulations on those who could receive GSL's, including a provision to provide that repayment of those loans would begin six months after the month in which a student-borrower was no longer a full-time student.⁵⁵

These two important pieces of legislation were the only ones to become law during the 98th Congress, but the trend was definitely swinging back in the direction of higher education funding since thirty-three separate pieces of legislation were introduced during this congressional session which, either directly or indirectly, impacted upon higher education

⁵⁴Robin Wilson, "Reagan Seeks a Record \$8.8 Billion for Aid to Students," Chronicle of Higher Education 34 (24 February 1988): A23.

⁵⁵House, A Bill to Provide Additional Authority for the Consolidation of Student Loans, 98th Cong., 1983. H.R. 3394.

in this country. After the lean years of retrenchment and budgetary cutbacks the field of education in general and higher education in particular was on the rebound.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

Carl D. Perkins was in many ways a simple man, and yet in others was a very complicated individual. His simplicity was in his devotion and dedication to those fields he chose as his personal arenas of combat, specifically education and labor. His complexity was in his ability to understand and use the system to achieve his ends. In the labyrinth of congressional legislative activity there were few who could work their way through the maze with any greater success than this mountain lawyer turned legislator.

He fought to bring the plight of the poor to the attention of the country, and in President Lyndon B. Johnson he found an ally who provided him with the vehicle necessary to see his goals accomplished. His patient, tenacious, sometimes stubborn, behind-the-scenes activities wore out opponents of measures to which he had dedicated himself. He refused to be branded as a Southern Democrat, and yet he was in the top five of seniority as a Democratic legislator going all the way back to the time of Harry Truman.

After seeing his battles won during the Great Society days of Johnson, Perkins found himself fighting

for preservation of ground already won during the administrations that would follow. Budgetary problems, inflation, unrest on college campuses, and general apathy toward the poor and toward education would serve to undermine many of his cherished programs. To his credit Perkins refused to bow to the pressure. He would use his "bulldog" nature to constantly attempt to find ways to re-fund his programs. He was not above backing such opposing administrations as the Reagan Administration with votes for their favorite legislative packages, such as lower income taxes and higher military spending, in an attempt to garner some support for his own personal priorities.¹

Was he successful? Long-time associate and Counsel for Education for the Committee on Education and Labor, Jack Jennings, wrote a very insightful article for the April, 1985, issue of Phi Delta Kappan. Jennings analyzed the conflict that existed between the views of Reagan and Perkins on the educational issue. He discussed the proposed changes Reagan wanted as he declared war on federal spending in the educational area and chronicled Perkins' stubborn resistance. It was

¹Pamela Glass, "Perkins Still Waging (Tug-of) War on Poverty," Ashland Daily Independent, 28 October 1982, 17.

Jennings' opinion that Reagan won some skirmishes, but Perkins won the war.

By the end of the first Reagan Administration the American Enterprise Institute concluded that education under President Reagan--in spite of grand rhetoric to the contrary--had changed little but not much. . . . The structure of the federal role in education remained substantially the same as it had been before Reagan took office.²

As pointed out previously, Reagan eventually abandoned his anti-education stance and submitted a budget calling for level funding at the increased amount already provided by Congress. He also dropped his opposition to the Education Department.³ Jennings attributed this success in opposing cuts to education to Carl Perkins' ability to forge a new bipartisan consensus in Congress on the importance of these programs in the total effort to improve United States education.⁴ It is Jennings' contention that the threat to the federal role in education, both now and in the years ahead, will be less direct than was the case during the first four years of the Ronald Reagan Administration.⁵

²Jack Jennings, "Will Carl Perkins' Legacy Survive Ronald Reagan's Policies?" Phi Delta Kappan, April 1985, 566.

³Ibid., 565-66.

⁴Ibid., 567.

⁵Ibid.

If the success of a man can be judged based upon his long-term commitment to a goal and the refusal to allow a dream to die without a struggle, there can be no doubt that Carl D. Perkins was a success. Without doubt there will be much greater understanding of his role in the legislative activity of this country and his behind-the-scenes activities when his personal papers are opened to the public. It may very well be that these papers will produce some information which will provide a tarnish to the luster of this mountain lawyer who became one of the most powerful men in Washington during his three decades of service. It is unlikely there will be anything revealed of sufficient magnitude to prevent future generations from viewing this man as one who did his very best to provide aid for those who could not speak clearly for themselves, and to do more than any other individual during that time-frame to open the door of higher education in this country to any person who desired to achieve that goal in his life.

Certainly the fact that the NDSL Program has now been renamed the Perkins Loan is indicative of the contribution his peers judged him to have in the importance of higher education funding. Perhaps of even greater significance is the fact there are literally thousands of students in colleges and universities all over this country today whose education has been made

possible, to a certain degree, by the legislative activities of this Kentucky mountain lawyer who viewed the commitment of the government of the United States to education as a necessity rather than an option.

APPENDIX A
BILLS SPONSORED AND COSPONSORED
BY CARL D. PERKINS

93rd Congress

Bill Number, Date Introduced, Digest

H.J. Res. 393, 28 February 1973, National Commission on
the Financing of Postsecondary Education

H.J. Res. 600, 6 June 1973, National Education Policy

H.R. 68, 3 January 1973, Student Loans and the Higher
Education Act

H.R. 69, 3 January 1973, Training Reading Teachers

H.R. 4189, 8 February 1973, Education of the Handicapped

H.R. 4924, 28 February 1973, Freedom for Teachers to
Change Employment

H.R. 7080, 16 April 1973, Student Loan Deferments

H.R. 7143, 18 April 1973, White House Conference on
Education

H.R. 11010, 18 October 1973, Comprehensive Manpower Act

H.R. 12253, 23 January 1974, General Education
Provisions Act

H.R. 12686, 6 February 1974, Education Allowances for
Veterans

H.R. 13084, 27 February 1974, Grants for Teaching
Training

H.R. 13991, 4 April 1974, Educational Statistics

H.R. 15688, 27 June 1974, Harry S. Truman Memorial
Scholarships

H.R. 15882, 11 July 1974, Child and Family Services Act

H.R. 16097, 24 July 1974, Education for Coal Production and Related Activities

H.R. 16098, 24 July 1974, National Reading Improvement Act

H.R. 16115, 25 July 1974, Internal Revenue Code of 1954

H.R. 17481, 20 November 1974, Harry S. Truman Memorial Scholarship Act

H.R. 17509, 25 November 1974, Tax Credits for Education

H.R. 17575, 5 December 1974, Career Guidance and Counseling

H.R. 17582, 9 December 1974, Tax Credit for Postsecondary Education

H.R. 17592, 9 December 1974, Tax Credit for Postsecondary Education

94th Congress

H.J.Res. 984, 11 June 1976, Emergency Technical Provisions Act

H.R. 60, 14 January 1975, Department of Education

H.R. 808, 14 January 1975, Mobile Teachers' Retirement Assistance Act

H.R. 1357, 14 January 1975, Education for Coal Production and Related Activities

H.R. 1461, 15 January 1975, Sex Discrimination in Service Academies

H.R. 1462, 15 January 1975, Basic Educational Opportunity Grants

H.R. 2600, 3 February 1975, Comprehensive School Health Education Act

H.R. 2655, 4 February 1975, Tax Credit for Postsecondary Education

H.R. 2966, 6 February 1975, Child and Family Services Act

H.R. 3270, 19 February 1975, Career Guidance and Counseling Act

- H.R. 3993, 27 February 1975, Career Guidance and Counseling Act
- H.R. 4221, 4 March 1975, Work-study Funds
- H.R. 5181, 19 March 1975, Education Amendments of 1974
- H.R. 5988, 15 April 1975, National Institute of Education
- H.R. 7217, 21 May 1975, Education for All Handicapped Children Act
- H.R. 7735, 9 June 1975, Second Class Mail for Higher Education
- H.R. 8584, 11 July 1975, National Nutrition Education Act
- H.R. 12029, 23 February 1976, Elementary and Secondary Career Education Act
- H.R. 12835, 29 March 1976, Vocational Education Amendments
- H.R. 12851, 29 March 1976, Higher Education Amendments
- H.R. 14070, 27 May 1976, Part B of Title IV of the Higher Education Act
- H.R. 14144, 2 June 1976, Veterans Education

95th Congress

- H.Res. 1072, 13 March 1978, Section 448 of the General Education Provisions Act
- H.J.Res. 649, 3 November 1977, White House Conference on the Arts
- H.R. 7, 4 January 1977, Elementary and Secondary Career Education Act
- H.R. 15, 4 January 1977, Elementary and Secondary Education Act
- H.R. 1140, 4 January 1977, Department of Education
- H.R. 1884, 13 January 1977, Elementary and Secondary Career Education Act
- H.R. 3436, 9 February 1977, Mobile Teachers' Retirement Assistance Act

- H.R. 3437, 9 February 1977, Education Amendments of 1976
- H.R. 3680, 17 February 1977, Elementary and Secondary Career Education Act
- H.R. 3681, 17 February 1977, Elementary and Secondary Career Education Act
- H.R. 3682, 17 February 1977, Education Amendments of 1976
- H.R. 4213, 1 March 1977, Education Amendments of 1976
- H.R. 4638, 8 March 1977, Education Amendments of 1976
- H.R. 4639, 8 March 1977, Elementary and Secondary Career Education Act
- H.R. 6692, 27 April 1977, Education of the Handicapped Amendments
- H.R. 6774, 29 April 1977, Education Amendment of 1976
- H.R. 7328, 23 May 1977, Urban Grant University Act
- H.R. 7696, 9 June 1977, Urban Grant University Act
- H.R. 7697, 9 June 1977, Urban Grant University Act
- H.R. 8040, 27 June 1977, Education Amendments
- H.R. 9210, 20 September 1977, Internal Revenue Code of 1954
- H.R. 10541, 25 January 1978, College Libraries Act
- H.R. 10569, 26 January 1978, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Education Act
- H.R. 10775, 6 February 1978, Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship
- H.R. 10854, 8 February 1978, Middle Income Student Assistance Act
- H.R. 10855, 8 February 1978, Middle Income Student Assistance Act
- H.R. 10890, 9 February 1978, Education Act
- H.R. 10892, 9 February 1978, Control of Paperwork Amendments
- H.R. 10930, 14 February 1978, Control of Paperwork Amendments

H.R. 11104, 23 February 1978, Tribally Controlled
Community College Assistance Act

H.R. 11274, 3 March 1978, Middle Income Student
Assistance Act

H.R. 13778, 8 August 1978, Department of Education
Organization Act

H.R. 13788, 8 August 1978, Mobile Teachers' Retirement
Assistance Act

96th Congress

H.R. 67, 15 January 1979, Mobile Teachers' Retirement
Assistance Act

H.R. 2444, 27 February 1979, Department of Education
Organization Act

H.R. 3181, 22 March 1979, Urban Grant University Act of
1979

H.R. 3226, 26 March 1979, G.I. Bill Education Benefits

H.R. 4591, 22 June 1979, Educational Amendments of 1978

H.R. 5192, 6 September 1979, Education Amendments of 1980

H.R. 6480, 11 February 1980, Section 1203 of Education
Amendments of 1978

97th Congress

H.Res. 422, 31 March 1982, Financial Aid for Graduate
Students

H.R. 1646, 4 February 1981, Youth Employment Act

H.R. 3231, 10 April 1981, Foreign Language Act

H.R. 5193, 11 December 1981, Title II of the Social
Security Act

H.R. 5320, 25 January 1982, Community Partnership for
Employment and Training Act

H.R. 5600, 24 February 1982, Title 38 of the United
States Code

H.R. 6485, 25 May 1982, Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978

H.R. 6674, 23 June 1982, American Defense Education Act

H.R. 6820, 21 July 1982, Handicapped Individuals Services and Training Act

H.R. 7048, 19 August 1982, Pell Grants

H.R. 7135, 16 September 1982, National Education and Economic Development Act of 1982

H.R. 7137, 16 September 1982, Appropriations for Education

98th Congress

H.Con.Res. 118, 28 April 1983, Federal Government Support of Higher Education

H.Con.Res. 157, 4 August 1983, Reorganization in the Department of Education

H.J.Res. 100, 26 January 1983, Prayer in School

H.J.Res. 203, 16 March 1983, State Commissions on Teacher Excellence

H.J.Res. 452, 26 January 1984, The Arts in Education

H.R. 11, 3 January 1983, Education Amendments of 1984

H.R. 30, 3 January 1983, Emergency Mathematics and Science Education Act

H.R. 601, 6 January 1983, Soviet-Eastern European Research and Training Act of 1983

H.R. 659, 6 January 1983, National Education and Economic Development Act of 1983

H.R. 881, 25 January 1983, American Defense Education Act

H.R. 1310, 8 February 1983, National Engineering and Science Personnel Act of 1983

H.R. 1699, 28 February 1983, National Engineering and Science Personnel Act of 1983

H.R. 2307, 23 March 1983, Tribally Controlled Community

College Assistance Act of 1978

H.R. 2461, 11 April 1983, Rehabilitation Act Extension of 1983

H.R. 2708, 21 April 1983, Foreign Language Assistance for National Security Act of 1983

H.R. 3245, 7 June 1983, National Summit Conference on Education Act of 1983

H.R. 3324, 15 June 1983, Close Up Foundation

H.R. 3384, 22 June 1983, Urban Grant University Act

H.R. 3394, 22 June 1983, Student Loan Consolidation and Technical Amendments Act of 1983

H.R. 3435, 28 June 1983, Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1984

H.R. 3520, 12 July 1983, Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1983

H.R. 3750, 3 August 1983, Computer Literacy Act of 1983

H.R. 4024, 28 September 1983, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation

H.R. 4164, 19 October 1983, Vocational Technical Education Act of 1983

H.R. 4472, 18 November 1983, Older Americans Personal Welfare Education and Training Act

H.R. 4785, 8 February 1984, Older Americans Act Amendments of 1984

H.R. 5017, 5 March 1984, Youth Incentive Employment Act

H.R. 5414, 11 April 1984, Older Americans Act Amendments of 1984

H.R. 5415, 11 April 1984, Older Americans Personal Health Education and Training Act

H.R. 5490, 12 April 1984, Civil Rights Act of 1984

H.R. 5596, 3 May 1984, Education for Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Improvement Act of 1984

H.R. 5609, 8 May 1984, American Defense Education Act

H.R. 5749, 30 May 1984, Secondary School Basic Skills Act

APPENDIX B

THE 1984 COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR
AND ITS SUBCOMMITTEES

The Committee on Education and Labor

Carl D. Perkins, Kentucky
Augustus F. Hawkins, California
William D. Ford, Michigan
Phillip Burton, California
Joseph M. Gaydos, Pennsylvania
William Clay, Missouri
Mario Biaggi, New York
Ike Andrews, North Carolina
Paul Simon, Illinois
George Miller, California
Austin J. Murphy, Pennsylvania
Baltasar Corrada, Puerto Rico
Dale F. Kildee, Michigan
Pat Williams, Montana
Ray Kogovsek, Colorado
Harold Washington, Illinois
Matthew G. Martinez, California
Major R. Owens, New York
Frank Harrison, Pennsylvania
Frederick C. Boucher, Virginia
Gary L. Ackerman, New York
John N. Erlenborn, Illinois
James M. Jeffords, Vermont
William F. Goodling, Pennsylvania
E. Thomas Coleman, Missouri
Thomas E. Petri, Wisconsin
Marge Roukema, New Jersey
Steve Gunderson, Wisconsin
Steve Bartlett, Texas
Ron Packard, California

The Subcommittee on
Elementary, Secondary
and Vocational Education

Carl D. Perkins, Kentucky
William D. Ford, Michigan

Ike Andrews, North Carolina
 George Miller, California
 Baltasar Corrada, Puerto Rico
 Dale E. Kildee, Michigan
 Pat Williams, Montana
 Augustus F. Hawkins, California
 Mario Biaggi, New York
 Harold Washington, Illinois
 Frederick C. Boucher, Virginia
 Matthew G. Martinez, California
 William F. Goodling, Pennsylvania
 Ron Packard, California
 Marge Roukema, New Jersey
 Steve Gunderson, Wisconsin
 Steve Bartlett, Texas
 John N. Erlenborn, Illinois

The Subcommittee on Employment Opportunities

Carl D. Perkins, Kentucky
 Augustus F. Hawkins, California
 William Clay, Missouri
 Baltasar Corrada, Puerto Rico
 Paul Simon, Illinois
 Harold Washington, Illinois
 Matthew G. Martinez, California
 Mario Biaggi, New York
 Pat Williams, Montana
 Ray Kogovsek, Colorado
 Major R. Owens, New York
 Frank Harrison, Pennsylvania
 James M. Jeffords, Vermont
 John N. Erlenborn, Illinois
 Steve Gunderson, Wisconsin
 William F. Goodling, Pennsylvania
 E. Thomas Coleman, Missouri
 Thomas E. Petri, Wisconsin
 Steve Bartlett, Texas

The Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations

Carl D. Perkins, Kentucky
 Phillip Burton, California
 William D. Ford, Michigan
 Dale E. Kildee, Michigan
 Austin J. Murphy, Pennsylvania
 Matthew G. Martinez, California
 Marge Roukema, New Jersey
 John N. Erlenborn, Illinois

Steve Bartlett, Texas
James M. Jeffords, Vermont

The Subcommittee on Health and Safety

Carl D. Perkins, Kentucky
Joseph M. Gaydos, Pennsylvania
Austin J. Murphy, Pennsylvania
William D. Ford, Michigan
Frank Harrison, Pennsylvania
Steve Gunderson, Wisconsin
John N. Erlenborn, Illinois

The Subcommittee on Human Resources

Carl D. Perkins, Kentucky
Ike Andrews, North Carolina
Baltasar Corrada, Puerto Rico
Pat Williams, Montana
Major R. Owens, New York
Frederick C. Boucher, Virginia
George Miller, California
Thomas E. Petri, Wisconsin
E. Thomas Coleman, Missouri
Marge Roukema, New Jersey
John N. Erlenborn, Illinois

The Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education

Carl D. Perkins, Kentucky
Paul Simon, Illinois
William D. Ford, Michigan
Ike Andrews, North Carolina
Ray Kogovsek, Colorado
Frank Harrison, Pennsylvania
Frederick C. Boucher, Virginia
Major R. Owens, New York
E. Thomas Coleman, Missouri
Steve Gunderson, Wisconsin
James M. Jeffords, Vermont
William F. Goodling, Pennsylvania
Thomas E. Petri, Wisconsin
Ron Packard, California

The Subcommittee on Labor Standards

Carl D. Perkins, Kentucky
George Miller, California
Phillip Burton, California
Dale E. Kildee, Michigan
William Clay, Missouri
Matthew G. Martinez, California
Major R. Owens, New York
Frank Harrison, Pennsylvania
John N. Erlenborn, Illinois
Thomas E. Petri, Wisconsin
Marge Roukema, New Jersey
Ron Packard, California

The Subcommittee on Select Education

Carl D. Perkins, Kentucky
Austin J. Murphy, Pennsylvania
George Miller, California
Mario Biaggi, New York
Paul Simon, Illinois
Joseph M. Gaydos, Pennsylvania
Pat Williams, Montana
Baltasar Corrada, Puerto Rico
Steve Bartlett, Texas
William F. Goodling, Pennsylvania
E. Thomas Coleman, Missouri
John N. Erlenborn, Illinois¹

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- U.S. Congress. House. A Bill to Extend and Amend the Higher Education Act of 1965. 94th Cong., 1976. H.R. 12851.
- U.S. Congress. House. A Bill to Extend for Five Years Certain Education Programs. 95th Cong., 1977. H.R. 15.
- U.S. Congress. House. A Bill to Make Certain Technical Miscellaneous Amendments to the Education Amendment of 1976. 95th Cong., 1977. H.R. 6774.
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