



SOUTH SUBURBAN COLLEGE PRESS RELEASE

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New House Chairman on Higher Education Boland visits SSC, discusses Illinois scholarship program

SOUTH HOLLAND, IL – State Representative Mike Boland (D-71), the Chairman of the Illinois House of Representatives Committee on Higher Education, toured South Suburban College this week as the guest of College President George Dammer and held a press conference about a new scholarship program he hopes to bring before the Illinois General Assembly in 2010.

“One of the areas I hope to work on is increasing access to higher education, as a part of that goal I’m working on creating a new kind of scholarship for Illinois students,” Boland stated. “This concept, which I call “Challenge Scholarships,” will not only benefit the student involved by having a year of free tuition at a community college, or the equivalent amount at a four year private or public college, but also help prevent the type of self-destructive behavior that hurts young people and costs taxpayers a huge bundle.”

The new Chair of the Higher Education Committee in the Illinois House of Representatives detailed his plan consisting of seven challenges high school students must meet: “A student in eighth grade and at least one parent would have to sign a pledge to maintain a “C” average throughout High School and have avoided arrest or suspension from school for drugs or alcohol abuse, or violent behavior until graduation in order to earn the Challenge Scholarship.”

Boland added, “In today’s world for many at-risk and vulnerable young people this would be a challenge indeed, but there would be a foot in the door of college education at the end.” Unlike many similar proposals of its kind, Representative Boland has some revenue stream ideas to fund the program, including a \$100 fee attached to all court adjudications in the State of Illinois, as well as seeking foundation and private contributions, among other resources.

The East Moline Democrat stated that he had personally attended a similar Community College (Black Hawk College in Moline) part-time during his financially struggling college years. Boland also had attended community college in Napa California as a full-time student, eventually earning a Bachelor’s Degree from Upper Iowa University, a Masters Degree from Henderson State University in Arkansas, and 43 semester hours of additional graduate credit from the University of Iowa and Western Illinois University. Before being elected to the Legislature, Boland worked full-time as a public school teacher and part-time as a college instructor.

“These experiences, as well as my service as a School Board member, reflect the love I have for education and my strong support for all education from pre-school to graduate school and the contribution that both private and public education make, not only for the individuals involved, but to society in general,” Boland said.

For more information, please contact Representative Boland’s District Office at 309-736-3360, or email MBoland71@msn.com.

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Pictured: State Representative Mike Boland speaks with instructor Jack Kirkpatrick (right) while touring South Suburban College with President George Dammer (left) following his “Challenge Scholarship” press conference.