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**Statement of C-RAC Support for Bill to Allow Waivers**

**for Accreditors to Bypass Barriers to Higher Education Innovation**

by Barbara Gellman-Danley

Chair of the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions

on the introduction of the Innovation in Accreditation Act, September 28, 2017

New legislation—the Innovation in Accreditation Act—introduced by Rep. Bradley Byrne (R-AL), addresses real barriers accreditors face in approving initiatives to benefit students and reduce institutions’ administrative burdens.

Enabling a process through which the U.S. Secretary of Education may waive barriers to innovation—as long as accreditors are able to ensure ongoing academic integrity and quality – is a commonsense way to address technological and other changes that challenge traditional education delivery.

The waiver stipulated in Rep. Byrne’s bill would be broad in nature and could be granted to accreditors to apply at their discretion. Actions taken based on the waiver would be reported for the record after the fact.

The Byrne bill can make a significant difference in freeing accreditors—and colleges—to advance strategies that have proven effective in yielding desired outcomes that otherwise would be prohibited. The Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions applauds such efforts to better serve today’s students.

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