Lawmakers introduce affordable textbook bill
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Earlier this month, a group of legislators introduced the Affordable College Textbook Act to the U.S. Senate and the House. The bill, introduced by Sens. Dick Durbin, Al Franken and Angus King and Reps. Rubén Hinojosa and Jared Polis, aims to lower textbook prices by creating a grant program that encourages the growth of the “open textbook.”

Open textbooks are available to students, teachers and anyone else who would like to use them online and in print, for little to no money, because they fall under an open copyright license. Many educators consider them to be the best approach to combat high textbook prices.

“One thing is clear: the traditional publishing market isn’t delivering the materials students need at prices they can afford,” Ethan Senack, a higher education advocate with the U.S. Public Interest Research Group, said in a statement.

In recent years, college affordability has become an ongoing and heated debate. However, the skyrocketing cost of textbooks has often been overlooked in the conversation.

“When buying a textbook becomes a barrier to education, you know something has to be changed,” Hinojosa, D-Texas, said in a statement. “And that’s exactly what we want to achieve with the Affordable College Textbook Bill.”

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