

#DOUBLEPELL

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
House Committee on Appropriations
Room H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

May 22, 2024

Dear Chair Baldwin, Chair Aderholt, Ranking Member Capito, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We write to urge you to make significant progress in fiscal year (FY) 2025 toward increasing the maximum Pell Grant award to \$13,000, which equals doubling the maximum award over FY 2021 levels. The Pell Grant program is the single most important tool to enable low-income students to afford college, yet the current maximum Pell award only covers between 13% and 31% of the average tuition, fees, housing, and food at institutions of higher education.¹ A maximum Pell Grant award of \$13,000 would restore much of the purchasing power the grant had in FY 1975.

Investing in Pell Grants is a sound investment not only for individual college students, but also for America's economic competitiveness and the strength of our business community. By 2031, more than 7 out of 10 jobs will require postsecondary education or training.² Graduates with a bachelor's degree or higher earn a weekly average median salary of \$1,886, compared to just \$899 for graduates with a high school diploma, and graduates experience a lower unemployment rate the higher their degree attainment.³

¹ Ma, J., & Pender, M. (2023). *Trends in college pricing and student aid 2023*. College Board.

<https://research.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/Trends%20Report%202023%20Updated.pdf>

² Center on Education and the Workforce. (n.d.). After everything: Projections of job, education, and training requirements through 2031. Georgetown University. <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/projections2031/>

³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (n.d.). *Earnings and unemployment rate by education attainment, 2023*. U.S. Department of Labor. <https://www.bls.gov/cps/earnings.htm#education>

We want to thank you for the historic increases provided to the Pell Grant in recent years and believe it is vital that you maintain the strong bipartisan support for the program as you work on FY 2025 funding. Given the current budget caps, we understand the challenges appropriators have in providing increased investments and appreciate that the funding in the Pell Grant program was preserved at level funding for FY 2024. However, level funding diminishes awards for students due to inflation. We strongly believe Congress should continue to make Pell Grant funding a top priority, especially since it is the cornerstone of federal student financial aid.

Pell Grants allow more than six million low- and middle-income students to attend college each year, serving as a critical boost in affordability for students who would not otherwise be able to attend college. For FY 2024, it is projected that over seven million students will benefit from the program. Pell Grant recipients today are more than twice as likely as other students to have student loans; nearly 7 out of 10 Pell Grant recipients who graduate from four-year colleges have student loans, and their average debt is \$2,069 more than non-Pell graduates.⁴

Ensuring adequate investment in the Pell Grant program is essential and increases college affordability for current and future students. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

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American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

American Association of Community Colleges

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Association of University Professors

American Association of University Women

Association of American Universities

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Bottom Line

⁴ Based on calculations made in 2023 by The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS) using data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2019-20. See this report: <https://ticas.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/How-Congress-Can-Strengthen-the-Pell-Grant-Program-and-Make-College-More-Affordable-for-Millions-of-Americans.pdf>

Breakthrough Central Texas
California Student Aid Commission
Capital Area College Access Network
Carolina Youth Coalition
Center for Law and Social Policy
College Access Plan
College AIM
College Beyond
College Now Greater Cleveland
College Possible
College Possible Minnesota
College Success Foundation
CollegeTracks, Inc.
Collegiate Directions, Inc.
Complete College America
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Council for Opportunity in Education
Council of Independent Colleges
Denver Scholarship Foundation
Detroit College Access Network
Dr. Doretha Pressey Southern Scholars Initiative, Inc.
EdTrust
Education Forward Arizona
EDUCAUSE
Equitable Foundation
External Affairs Office, Associated Students of the University of California: Berkeley
First Generation College Bound
First Graduate
Florida College Access Network
Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce
Goddard Riverside
Goddard Riverside Options Center
Higher Heights Youth Empowerment Programs, Inc.
Hildreth Institute
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
I Know I Can
Institute for Higher Education Policy
Latino U College Access
LeadMN
Let's Get Ready

Los Angeles United Methodist Urban Foundation
Menlo College
Michigan College Access Network
Middle States Commission on Higher Education
Missouri College and Career Attainment Network
More Than Bootstraps
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
National College Attainment Network
National Education Association
National Indian Education Association
National Scholarship Providers Association
New America Higher Education Policy Program
New Orleans College & Career Attainment Network
New York Public Interest Research Group
Northern California College Promise Coalition
Ohio Student Association
On Point for College
OneGoal
Oregon Student Association
Partners For Rural Impact
Phi Beta Kappa Society
Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
Philadelphia College Prep Roundtable
Reach Higher Montana
SEO Scholars
Southern California College Attainment Network
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association
Students United
The Institute for College Access & Success
The Pittsburgh Promise
The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis
Third Way
TN College Access and Success Network
Today's Students Coalition
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United Negro College Fund
Woodward Hines Education Foundation
Yes We Must Coalition