



national association of state student grant and aid programs

[www.nassgap.org/](http://www.nassgap.org/) (202) 483-7060

June 15, 2005

The Honorable Ralph Regula  
2306 Rayburn House Office  
Building, Washington, DC 20515-6024

Dear Chairman Regula:

The National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP), representing the state student grant agencies and the 3.4 million college students they serve, thanks you for your continued support of the Federal student aid programs. We very much appreciate the subcommittee's inclusion of funding for many of the programs targeted for elimination in the President's budget, in particular, LEAP, GEAR UP, and TRIO. In addition, we thank you for supporting the increase of \$50 in the maximum Pell Grant award.

As you know, the **LEAP program is 100% need-based** and has been in existence since the earliest of days of our country's commitment to educational opportunity (under an earlier name, SSIG or State Student Incentive Grants). Under the terms of LEAP, each federal LEAP dollar leverages up to \$3 in need-based student financial aid, as states are required to match federal funds with new state dollars, up to \$2 in state funds for every federal dollar received.

While budget restrictions over the recent past have limited LEAP funds, the current level of \$65 million, as recommended by the Subcommittee, means that students will receive approximately \$165 million in grant aid because of the state matching funds. **No other federal student aid program stretches each federal dollar as much as LEAP. During tight budget times as these, continuing the funding for LEAP makes more sense than ever.**

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In a recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, economist Sandy Baum called for maintaining the commitment to LEAP because of its matching component and the partnership it creates with the states. Furthermore, since 100% of LEAP funds and matching state funds goes to students — **with no administrative allowance for the agencies** — we know for certain that **it is the students who get hurt when LEAP is not fully funded**, not the agencies administering the funds.

We know you are well aware that there are significant budget restrictions at the state levels too. Still, states have historically demonstrated their willingness to provide billions of dollars in need-based student aid. We are asking that the Federal government maintain its commitment to needy students by continuing to provide funding for LEAP. And we thank you for your strong support of the LEAP, GEAR UP, TRIO, and Pell Grant programs.

We ask that you continue your support in the House Appropriations Committee and, most especially, in conference with the Senate. We are particularly concerned because we understand that the Senate's budget target is more than \$1 billion less than the House approved appropriation, and thus the House-restored programs could once again face elimination.

We also look forward to working with you on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Please call our representative, Bart Astor [(703) 444-1824, e-mail: [bartastor@nassgap.org](mailto:bartastor@nassgap.org)], to learn more about LEAP, NASSGAP, and the college access partnership between the Federal and state governments.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Theresa Antworth  
**NASSGAP President**