



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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 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>

<sup>2</sup> 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/>

<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

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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Advancing Academics

Alabama Possible

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

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<sup>4</sup> 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  
Toledo Tomorrow  
uAspire  
UNITE-LA

United Negro College Fund  
Woodward Hines Education Foundation  
Yes We Must Coalition