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

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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. 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-Strenthen-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

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