



September 5, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Room S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Room S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leaders Schumer and Jeffries:

We are writing to express our strong opposition to cuts to critical education programs contained in the House fiscal year (FY) 2026 Labor-Health and Human Services-Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) bill. This bill is not in the best interest of students, and we ask that you oppose the elimination of the Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants (FSEOG) and the reduction in funding for the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program.

The Senate Labor-HHS bill provides level-funding for both FSEOG and FWS programs. Given the political environment, we understand the financial constraints the Senate is operating under and that level-funding recognizes the value of these programs. At a minimum, Congress should level-fund these programs in FY26. However, the House has proposed to completely eliminate FSEOG and reduce funding for FWS by almost 40 percent.

The FSEOG program serves over 1.8 million low-income students who are in need of additional financial assistance and the FWS program serves over 455,000 undergraduate and graduate students.¹ Both of the programs are crucial to increasing access to postsecondary education for students in need of additional resources and help increase the chances of students completing college.

Data clearly shows that there is value in obtaining a postsecondary credential. By 2033, the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that there will be over 2.8 million new U.S. jobs requiring a

¹ U.S. Department of Education. (2025). *FY 2026 Department of Education justifications of appropriations estimates to the Congress*. Retrieved September 2, 2025, from <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fy-2026-congressional-justification-student-financial-assistance-110145.pdf>

postsecondary credential.² College graduates earn more than \$1.6 million more over their lifetime than high school graduates³ and are far more likely to be employed, pay taxes, and reduce future government spending on social services.⁴

Also, both the House and Senate Labor-HHS bills provide level-funding for the Pell Grant. With over 7 million students participating in the program⁵, it is critical that we provide the necessary resources to, at the very least, ensure that the program keeps up with the cost of inflation. While level-funding for the Pell Grant program does not allow for it to increase subject to the rise in inflation, we do appreciate both chambers for seeing the value in this program and preserving its funding at its current level.

Thank you for your time and attention to this extremely important matter. Students should always come first, and we ask that you restore funding for FWS and FSEOG in the final FY 2026 House Labor-HHS bill.

Sincerely,

ACPA-College Student Educators International
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
American Federation of Teachers
American Psychological Association
Association of American Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Council for Opportunity in Education
Council of Graduate Schools
Council of Independent Colleges
Council on Social Work Education
EDUCAUSE
NAFSA: Association of International Educators
NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Colleges and Employers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of State Student Grant & Aid Programs
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
National College Attainment Network
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

² Torpey, E. (2024, August). *Education level and projected openings, 2023–33*. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2024/article/education-level-and-openings-2023-33.htm>

³ Carnevale, A.P., Cheah, B., & Wenzinger, E. (2021). *The College payoff*. Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce. https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/cew-college_payoff_2021-fr.pdf

⁴ Ma, J. & Pender, M. (2023). *Education pays 2023: The benefits of higher education for individuals and society*. College Board. <https://research.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/education-pays-2023.pdf>

⁵ U.S. Department of Education. (2025). *FY 2026 Department of Education justifications of appropriations estimates to the Congress*. Retrieved September 2, 2025, from <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fy-2026-congressional-justification-student-financial-assistance-110145.pdf>

Phi Beta Kappa Society
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association

Cc:

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Robert Aderholt, Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies