



September 15, 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 20515

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:

On behalf of 88 signers representing the broader higher education community, we write to urge you to invest in our nation's workforce by preserving the purchasing power of the Pell Grant in fiscal year (FY) 2026. We appreciate that both Senate and House appropriators have proposed to preserve the current maximum Pell award, and we respectfully urge lawmakers to include at least a \$200 increase to the maximum award, without cutting other education programs, to help offset roughly half of the effect that inflation has had on the value of the grant in recent years.

More than seven million students across the nation rely on Pell Grants to pay for postsecondary degree and training programs. By adjusting the maximum award for inflation, the grant retains its value year over year, which helps to reduce student loan borrowing, increase graduation rates, and improve labor market outcomes.

The Pell Grant program remains one of the smartest, most targeted investments lawmakers can make to fuel economic growth. The current maximum Pell award covers the lowest share of college costs in the program's history¹, contributing to a persistent "affordability gap" that forces low- and middle-income students to either take out loans or forgo higher education and training entirely. If the grant loses value, this gap will likely widen.

¹ Calculations by The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS) using data from the College Board's 2024 Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid report (available at <https://research.collegeboard.org/trends/college-pricing>) and U.S. Department of Education data on the maximum Pell Grant.

We strongly urge you to invest in our nation's students and our economic future by ensuring the maximum Pell Grant award retains its value in FY 2026.

Sincerely,

10,000 Degrees

AACTE: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

Achieve Atlanta

ACPA-College Student Educators International

ACTION Ohio

Alabama Possible

American Association of University Women

American Council on Education

American Federation of Teachers

American Indian Higher Education Consortium

Association of American Universities

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

Association of Community College Trustees

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Better Future Foundation

BLU Educational Foundation

Breakthrough Central Texas

California State Student Association

Capital Area College Access Network

Center for Higher Education Policy and Practice at SNHU

Center for Law and Social Policy

Children's Law Center of California

College AIM

College Now Greater Cleveland

Community Bridges, Inc.

Congressional Research Institute for Social Work Policy

Council of Independent Colleges

EdTrust

Education Forward Arizona

Education to Employment Partners

EDUCAUSE

Excelencia in Education

First Generation College Bound

FirstGen Forward

Florida College Access Network

Foster Success

Fostering Academic Achievement Nationwide

Generations United

Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce

Hildreth Institute

Hill Country Adventure Therapy

Institute for Higher Education Policy
Iowa State University
Latino Education Advancement Foundation
Latino U College Access
LeadMN
LUCA
Matchlighters Scholars Program
Michigan College Access Network
Michigan League for Public Policy
Missouri College & Career Attainment Network
More Than Bootstraps
NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
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 Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients)
National Disability Rights Network
New America Higher Education Policy Program
NYPIRG
Oceana College Access Network
On Point For College
Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio Youth Advisory Board
Partnership for the Future
Phi Beta Kappa Society
Reach Higher Montana
Say Yes Syracuse
SchoolHouse Connection
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association
Student Senate for California Community Colleges
Student Senate for the California Community Colleges
Students Rising Above
Students United
The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs
The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS)
TN College Access and Success Network
Today's Students Coalition
uAspire
UNCF
University of California Student Association
USC McMorro Neighborhood Academic Initiative
Vickery Meadow Youth Development Foundation
Yes We Must Coalition
Young Invincibles
Youth Law Center

Cc:

The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations