



BIG TEN SINCE 1896

November 13, 2015

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Reid:

As college affordability is a top priority facing our nation, we are writing to call to your attention a matter that adversely impacts students from low-income families at Big Ten institutions.

On October 1, 2015, authorization of the federal Perkins Loan program expired. The House of Representatives unanimously approved a one-year, no-cost extension of the program through the Higher Education Extension Act (H.R. 3594); however, the Senate has yet to advance that measure. As a result, thousands of current and future students face uncertainty as this critical program is no longer available. Hundreds of institutions across the country, including the Big Ten, are struggling to find another way to help their students afford their education. We write to express our strong support for the Perkins Loan Program and request that the Senate take up and pass the Higher Education Extension Act as soon as possible.

Since its inception in 1958, the Perkins Loan program has played an important part of providing need-based financial aid for our students. The program distributes low-interest, subsidized loans to students with demonstrated financial need and priority is given to those with exceptional need. When students graduate, they repay their loans directly to their postsecondary institution and repayments are used to make new loans to students by way of a revolving fund. Until 2005, Congress appropriated funding for capital contributions that schools matched with institutional funds.

Perkins loans are an integral part of the financial aid packages made up of grants, work study and loans available to students with the greatest need. In 2013-14, \$74.8 million was disbursed to 39,491 students throughout the Big Ten universities through this program. Therefore, we urge you to immediately pass H.R. 3594 and extend this program until Congress has the opportunity to completely consider all existing student financial aid programs through the next reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

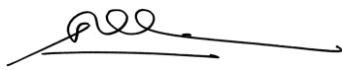
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael V. Drake".

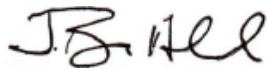
Michael V. Drake
President
The Ohio State University

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca M. Blank".

Rebecca M. Blank
Chancellor
University of Wisconsin-Madison



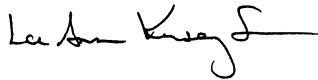
Michael A. McRobbie
President
Indiana University



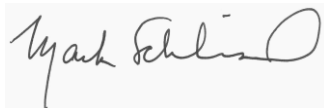
J. Bruce Harreld
President
University of Iowa



Wallace D. Loh
President
University of Maryland



Lou Anna K. Simon
President
Michigan State University



Mark Schlissel
President
University of Michigan



Eric W. Kaler
President
University of Minnesota



Harvey Perlman
Chancellor
University of Nebraska-Lincoln



Morton O. Schapiro
President
Northwestern University



Eric J. Barron
President
Pennsylvania State University



Robert L. Barchi
President
Rutgers University



Barbara J. Wilson
Interim Chancellor
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

cc:

Chairman Lamar Alexander, Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee
Ranking Member Patty Murray, Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee
Congressional Delegations of the Big Ten States: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan,
Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin