



★ FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT ★

July 29, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi,

On behalf of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), I write to urge you to provide sufficient funding for the Federal Pell Grant program in the House debt ceiling and deficit reduction package. NASFAA represents more than 18,000 financial aid professionals who serve 16 million students each year at 2,800 colleges and universities throughout the country. The Pell Grant program is vital to many of the students that our members serve on a daily basis.

We were very pleased that the initial deficit reduction package released earlier this week, S.627, contained funding to ensure a \$5,550 maximum Pell Grant award for FY 2012 and FY 2013. This commitment to the Pell program is needed to ensure the nation's workforce remains competitive in the rapidly evolving economy. That is why we were extremely disappointed to learn that some House Republicans are opposing S.627 and want to cut the Pell program to make a minute reduction in our nation's deficit.

We realize that hard choices must be made in this difficult fiscal environment, but students have already seen a reduction in financial aid this year through the elimination of the Year-Round Pell Grant, the Leveraging Educational Assistance Program, reductions in the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Program, and now the proposed elimination of loan interest subsidies for graduate students. Nearly 10 million low-income students depend on the Pell Grant each year to help them achieve their higher education goals. A reduction in Pell would force these students to work more, borrow more, or forgo college altogether. That is something that our nation simply cannot afford.

In these final hours before the debt ceiling limit is reached, I urge you to carefully consider the long-term value of the Pell Grant and its vital role in our nation's future economic growth. Failure to include adequate funds for the Pell Grant would have a devastating impact on these students and also the investment in our nation's future.

Thank you for all you do for students and families.

Sincerely,

Justin Draeger
President and CEO

NASFAA

July 29, 2011

cc:

The Honorable Harry Reid
The Honorable Mitch McConnell