



June 13, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
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 Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs Capito and Aderholt and Ranking Members Baldwin and DeLauro:

We are writing to express our opposition to the fiscal year (FY) 2026 President's Budget Request for student aid programs and ask that you oppose these proposed cuts.

Over decades, both Republicans and Democrats in Congress created and invested in the federal student aid programs to bolster a competitive U.S. workforce, ensure low- and middle-income students have the same opportunities as their more affluent peers, and strengthen America's economy.

By 2033, the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that there will be over 3.8 million new U.S. jobs requiring a postsecondary credential.¹ College graduates earn more than \$1.2 million more over their lifetime than high school graduates² and are far more likely to be employed, pay taxes, and reduce future government spending on social services.³

The budget request proposes to cut the Pell Grant by \$1,685, from a maximum of \$7,395 to \$5,710. Over 7 million students participate in the Pell Grant program and reducing the maximum award will erect barriers for college access and completion. Congress should address any projected Pell Grant funding gap by investing mandatory and discretionary funding without making eligibility cuts.

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2024, August 29). *Employment projections: Occupations that need more education for entry are projected to grow faster than average*. <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2024/article/education-level-and-projected-openings.htm#:~:text=Occupations%20that%20typically%20require%20a%20bachelor's%20degree%20are%20expected%20to,the%20average%20for%20all%20occupations>.

² 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

³ 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>

The budget request also slashes funding for Federal Work Study (FWS) and makes changes to the program's non-federal share. Institutions would be required to pay 75% of a student's hourly wages and the federal government's contribution would be reduced to 25%.

In addition, the budget request completely eliminates funding for Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG); TRIO programs; the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness in Undergraduate Program (GEAR-UP); and Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN). Over 430,000 students utilize FWS; 1.8 million students utilize FSEOG; over 874,000 students benefit from TRIO; over 145 awards were awarded to states and partnerships in GEAR-UP; and 71 institutions received funding from GAANN to award 415 graduate fellowships.⁴ These programs impact millions of students, especially low-income students, and would be detrimental should Congress pass this budget request.

Thank you for your time and attention to this extremely important matter. We call on Congress to continue its bipartisan support for these programs and ask that you oppose cuts to the student aid programs in the FY 2026 President's Budget Request.

Sincerely,

SAA Steering Committee



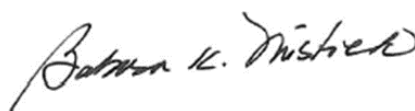
Mark Becker
President, Association of Public
and Land-grant Universities



Walter G. Bumphus, Ph.D.
President and CEO, American Association
of Community Colleges



Kimberly Jones
President, Council for Opportunity in
Education



Barbara K. Mistick
President, National Association of
Independent Colleges and Universities




Ted Mitchell
President, American Council on Education



Barbara R. Snyder
President, Association of American
Universities

⁴ U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). FY 2025 Department of Education Justifications of Appropriation Estimates to the Congress. Retrieved June 2, 2025, from <https://www.ed.gov/about/ed-overview/annual-performance-reports/budget/budget-requests/fy-2025-department-of-education-justifications-of-appropriation-estimates-congress>



Melanie E. Storey
President and CEO, National Association
of Student Financial Aid Administrators



Dr. Charles L. Welch
President and CEO, American Association of
State Colleges and Universities

Cc:

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, Chair, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Ranking Member, Senate Health, Education, Labor and
Pensions Committee

The Honorable Tim Walberg, Chairman, House Committee on Education and Workforce

The Honorable Bobby Scott, Ranking Member, House Committee on Education and
Workforce