



Thursday, October 3, 2019

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
United States Senate
428 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
United States Senate
428 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray,

Thank you for your leadership and work, in a bi-partisan manner, to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, including the federal Pell Grant program. Providing these need-based grants to low-income students is critical to promoting access to postsecondary education. However, the program must be improved to allow access to many non-traditional students who drive our state workforces and in turn, our economies.

Key reforms should include:

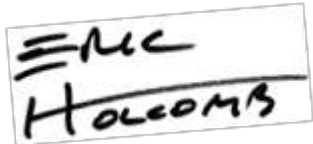
- Access for Pell-eligible students to shorter-term, employer-driven programs that provide the opportunities workers need for upskilling and training at the speed of the private sector;
- Expand Pell eligibility to incarcerated individuals, resulting in a significant influx of talent into a labor force and bringing down recidivism rates;
- Expand Pell eligibility for high school students taking postsecondary coursework to equip more students with technical certificates and associates degrees before they ever leave high school;
- Expand Pell to adults participating in adult basic education programs to give states the tool to pair these efforts with postsecondary credential attainment.

While many states have dedicated state resources to targeted populations to build their workforce capacity, expanding Pell eligibility would greatly expand those programs nationwide. A few pilot programs currently exist under Pell, but they are complicated, onerous to navigate, and restricted in their use.

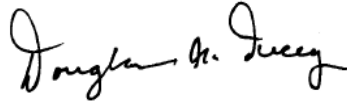
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We applaud your efforts to modernize the Pell program to recognize the workforce demands of today and tomorrow. As chief executives of our states, we are committed to working with you and urge Congress to address Pell flexibility this Congress.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Eric Holcomb in black ink, enclosed in a rectangular box.

Governor Eric Holcomb
State of Indiana

Handwritten signature of Doug Ducey in black ink.

Governor Doug Ducey
State of Arizona

Handwritten signature of Asa Hutchinson in black ink.

Governor Asa Hutchinson
State of Arkansas

Handwritten signature of Kim Reynolds in black ink.

Governor Kim Reynolds
State of Iowa

Handwritten signature of Matt Bevin in black ink.

Governor Matt Bevin
Commonwealth of Kentucky

Handwritten signature of Charlie Baker in blue ink.

Governor Charlie Baker
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Handwritten signature of Phil Bryant in black ink.

Governor Phil Bryant
State of Mississippi

Handwritten signature of Mike Parson in black ink.

Governor Mike Parson
State of Missouri

Handwritten signature of Chris Sununu in black ink.

Governor Chris Sununu
State of New Hampshire

Handwritten signature of Doug Burgum in black ink.

Governor Doug Burgum
State of North Dakota

Handwritten signature of Kevin Stitt in black ink.

Governor Kevin Stitt
State of Oklahoma

Handwritten signature of Mark Gordon in blue ink.

Governor Mark Gordon
State of Wyoming