May 22, 2024

Dear Chair Baldwin, Chair Aderholt, Ranking Member Capito, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We write to urge you to make significant progress in fiscal year (FY) 2025 toward increasing the maximum Pell Grant award to $13,000, which equals doubling the maximum award over FY 2021 levels. The Pell Grant program is the single most important tool to enable low-income students to afford college, yet the current maximum Pell award only covers between 13% and 31% of the average tuition, fees, housing, and food at institutions of higher education.\(^1\) A maximum Pell Grant award of $13,000 would restore much of the purchasing power the grant had in FY 1975.

Investing in Pell Grants is a sound investment not only for individual college students, but also for America’s economic competitiveness and the strength of our business community. By 2031, more than 7 out of 10 jobs will require postsecondary education or training.\(^2\) Graduates with a bachelor’s degree or higher earn a weekly average median salary of $1,886, compared to just $899 for graduates with a high school diploma, and graduates experience a lower unemployment rate the higher their degree attainment.\(^3\)

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\(^2\) Center on Education and the Workforce. (n.d.). *After everything: Projections of job, education, and training requirements through 2031*. Georgetown University. [https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/projections2031/](https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/projections2031/)

We want to thank you for the historic increases provided to the Pell Grant in recent years and believe it is vital that you maintain the strong bipartisan support for the program as you work on FY 2025 funding. Given the current budget caps, we understand the challenges appropriators have in providing increased investments and appreciate that the funding in the Pell Grant program was preserved at level funding for FY 2024. However, level funding diminishes awards for students due to inflation. We strongly believe Congress should continue to make Pell Grant funding a top priority, especially since it is the cornerstone of federal student financial aid.

Pell Grants allow more than six million low- and middle-income students to attend college each year, serving as a critical boost in affordability for students who would not otherwise be able to attend college. For FY 2024, it is projected that over seven million students will benefit from the program. Pell Grant recipients today are more than twice as likely as other students to have student loans; nearly 7 out of 10 Pell Grant recipients who graduate from four-year colleges have student loans, and their average debt is $2,069 more than non-Pell graduates.4

Ensuring adequate investment in the Pell Grant program is essential and increases college affordability for current and future students. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

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Bottom Line

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Los Angeles United Methodist Urban Foundation
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Michigan College Access Network
Middle States Commission on Higher Education
Missouri College and Career Attainment Network
More Than Bootstraps
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 Education Association
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National Scholarship Providers Association
New America Higher Education Policy Program
New Orleans College & Career Attainment Network
New York Public Interest Research Group
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SEO Scholars
Southern California College Attainment Network
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association
Students United
The Institute for College Access & Success
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