

July 27, 2026,

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
Chair
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, & Pensions
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, & Pensions
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Chairman Cassidy and Ranking Member Sanders,

As presidents of associations whose members include the nation's community colleges, public regional universities, public research universities, land-grant universities, and most research-intensive private and public institutions, we write in enthusiastic support of S. 2511, the *College Transparency Act*, which is scheduled for consideration by the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions on July 30th.

The College Transparency Act (CTA) is one of the most significant opportunities in decades to modernize the nation's postsecondary data infrastructure. At a time when students, institutions, policymakers and taxpayers alike are demanding more and better information on college costs, outcomes, and value, the CTA would provide accurate, comprehensive federal data needed to inform decision-making while providing the appropriate safeguards for student privacy and data security. By filling longstanding gaps in the current federal higher education reporting infrastructure, the legislation would ensure that students have access to meaningful information about the educational pathways available to them and policymakers and higher education leaders have relevant data to strengthen evidence-based policymaking. We note in particular that for colleges and universities, it will provide new and much needed tools to assess academic programs and maximize student success.

The need for CTA has become more urgent as the federal government has become increasingly interested in using outcomes data to inform higher education policy and investments. Under Republican and Democratic administrations, the Department of Education has expanded the availability of postsecondary education information to improve the public's understanding of college costs and outcomes. These efforts have been valuable but remain fundamentally constrained by existing limitations in federal data. Without a change in statute—without the CTA—these shortcomings cannot be fully addressed.

For example, much of the data on the College Scorecard and the forthcoming Student Tuition and Transparency System (STATS) and Earnings Accountability framework only account for recipients of Title IV federal student aid, failing to include the outcomes of nearly 40 percent of postsecondary students nationwide. These limitations are particularly pronounced at community colleges, where close to sixty percent of all students finance their education without federal aid. These gaps leave

policymakers, institutions, and prospective students with an incomplete and sometimes misleading picture of institutional and program performance.

The need for comprehensive, complete, and accurate data is especially critical given the federal government's increasing emphasis on the transparency of program-level outcomes. As examples, the recently established accountability frameworks to measure the earnings of academic programs and Workforce Pell both rely on accurate, comprehensive outcomes data to ensure that accountability measures accurately reflect institutional performance and student success. Both policies also rely on institutions to report a significant amount of data, on top of their already hefty reporting obligations for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). For Workforce Pell in particular, institutions must work with states and vendors to retrofit and/or use proxies to assess potential program eligibility, because there are no federal mechanisms to report the outcomes of non-Title-IV-aided students.

In addition to filling the substantial gaps in current federal data, the legislation will also provide answers to critical questions on outcomes of student groups. As an example, student veterans often have unique needs and are, appropriately, a group of substantial interest to policymakers. Yet, we do not have adequate disaggregated data on their performance. We would also note that student veterans are also, too often, omitted from current federal data as they may rely on Department of Veterans Affairs benefits rather than Department of Education student aid.

We urge the Committee to advance this longstanding bipartisan legislation. The College Transparency Act would equip students with better information, provide institutions with stronger tools for continuous improvement, and give policymakers the tools to develop effective higher education policy. We appreciate the Committee's consideration of the CTA and look forward to working with Congress and the Administration to secure its enactment and successful implementation.

Sincerely,



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