

December 10, 2025

The Honorable Tim Walberg
Chair
House Committee on Education & the
Workforce
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Ranking Member
House Committee on Education & the
Workforce
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Walberg and Ranking Member Scott,

We write as presidents of associations whose members include the nation's regional public universities and public research universities to underscore our concern with H.R. 6472, which we understand the Committee will markup on Thursday.

While we appreciate the Committee's interest in wanting to ensure affordable and accessible public higher education for residents of certain U.S. territories, placing unfunded mandates on states and state institutions in a manner that erodes federalism and undermines state and institutional policy, is not an appropriate action. That a state institution may participate in federal student aid programs is an inadequate justification for the federal government to usurp state processes which determine residency requirements for in-state tuition. Further, a past precedent of Congress tucking a similar mandate relative to the Freely Associated States into a must-pass minibuss appropriations measure and quickly passing it, should not give license to expand the mandate.

In our U.S. constitutional system of federalism, states and state institutions— not the federal government — appropriately set tuition policy at public institutions of higher education. On average, states provide most of the funding for public higher education and set tuition policy to best suit their individual state and student needs within the unique contexts of state budgets. Thus, across our nation, states have a wide variety of policies governing in-state tuition, and a wide variety of processes for setting tuition policy.

We urge the Committee to respect the role of state and state institutions and find an alternative pathway to providing aid to residents of the U.S. territories if the goal is to provide additional benefits. The federal government could provide federal aid rather than seizing control and placing unfunded mandates on states. Such a pathway would also ensure the federal government is not singling out the public sector in a disparate manner than private and proprietary institutions.

We further note that as this legislation is being considered just a year after the mandate relative to the Freely Associated States, the more Congress opens the door, the more various interests will make the case they should be next for a federal mandate on states.

Congress should reestablish and reassert the appropriate boundaries between powers of the federal government and states.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Waded Cruzado, Ph.D.
President, Association of Public and
Land-grant Universities
(APLU)



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

CC: Members of the House Committee on Education & the Workforce