



December 5, 2008

Committee on Appropriations
U. S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

As Congress completes the FY2009 appropriations process, we ask you to enact the \$169 Pell Grant increase provided for in the House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies FY2009 appropriations bill. This increase represents a real step towards addressing years of reduced or flat discretionary funding for the Pell Grant program, which is the primary path to a college education for one-third of American students.

In combination with the mandatory funding for Pell authorized by the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA), a \$169 increase would reverse cuts made in FY07 and increase the maximum Pell Grant award by \$850 over the FY2006 level, to \$4,900. Paired with increases to the TRIO and GEAR UP programs, this support ensures that millions of talented students will be prepared for and able to attend college.

History shows that during economic downturns, Americans increasingly turn to postsecondary education. Displaced workers return for more training and job-seekers enroll for additional skills, while current college students strive to stay in college to complete their degrees with fewer family resources on which to draw. Of the 6.2 million Americans who are 25 and older and were unemployed as of September 2008, 81 percent have no bachelor's degree and 53 percent have never been to college. Grant funding for these students is one of the best investments the federal government can make. The better-educated and better-trained the United States workforce is, the faster our nation will come out of its current economic distress.

In facing such challenges, it is important to increase investment in the other programs that assist students in achieving their educational goals. Federal funding for LEAP state grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Work Study and Perkins Loans has eroded over the last decade. These programs are over-matched by states and institutions, thus increased federal funding generates far more student aid dollars than are appropriated. We ask that as the appropriations process moves forward, that the Committee on Appropriations continues to make students a priority and support investment in America's future. We look forward to working with you through the remainder of the 110th Congress, and during the 111th Congress.

Sincerely,

Molly Corbett Broad
Co-Chairperson

David Warren
Co-Chairperson



Student Aid Alliance



2008 Members

AACRAO: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
Alliance for Excellent Education
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
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American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Community Colleges
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American Council on Education
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Council for Higher Education Accreditation
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Student Aid Alliance

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Theirs and ours.**



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Committee on Appropriations
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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The College Board
The Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising
The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
The National Collegiate Athletic Association
U.S. Public Interest Research Group
United Negro College Fund
United States Student Association
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University of Maryland System
University of Michigan
University of Southern California
University of Washington
Utah Valley State College
Vanderbilt University

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