



February 1, 2011

The Honorable Paul Ryan
The Honorable Harold Rogers
The Honorable Dennis Rehberg

Cc: The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
The Honorable Norman Dicks
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro

Dear Chairmen:

As the new leaders of the Budget and Appropriations Committees, you have a direct role in guiding our nation as we tackle the challenges of reducing the deficit, decreasing our national debt and fostering our economic recovery. We believe that a critical part of ensuring our nation's economic stability is creating an educated, skilled workforce for American jobs.

While you prepare to finalize the FY 2011 appropriations bill in the next few weeks, we ask you to maintain funding for the student aid programs that provide grants, work study and loans to low- and middle-income students, and the programs that help at-risk students get into and stay in college.

Without the federal commitment to student financial aid, there will not be enough educated, skilled Americans to sustain economic recovery or secure our nation's future for the next generation. When the federal government helps students who help themselves take responsibility for their higher education, the country is paid back by fewer social services needed, more revenue generated, better health, the development of new technologies and the creation of new companies and industries.

We appreciate that the last Congress retired the Pell Grant shortfall, which will ensure students receive a \$5,550 maximum grant next year. Millions of students would not even think about applying to college without the promise of a Pell Grant to help pay for it.

The Pell Grant Program works in tandem with other important programs that we ask you to maintain. It is a false economy to target the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) Program, the Federal Perkins Loan Program and the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP) Program for elimination because they serve a smaller number of students than Pell Grants. These programs are not duplicative of Pell and are very cost effective. On average, a low-income student receives over \$2,500 from LEAP and SEOG combined. Perkins

Loans provide additional low-cost aid. Colleges significantly over-match the federal dollars received through SEOG and Perkins funds, and states more than match LEAP funds, greatly magnifying the impact of federal funding.

The early intervention programs TRIO and GEAR UP are equally as important. Together these programs target students who have the potential to succeed in higher education, but who are at-risk of not getting the academic and personal support they need to complete high school, and go on to college. By providing students with support services from the 6th grade all the way through postsecondary study, these programs promote greater high school and college completion rates, thereby preparing our young people to succeed in high-demand American jobs.

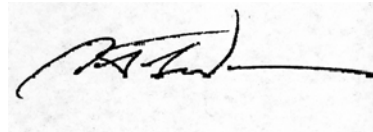
Finally, it is important to support merit and need-based graduate education programs such as the Jacob K. Javits Fellowships Program and Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN), which will create the next generation of scholars, faculty, and experts in a wide spectrum of fields. These graduates help address pressing national issues and the challenges we face in an economic downturn. Further, the research and teaching that graduate students do is an essential part of their training to become the leaders our nation needs to sustain and revitalize our innovation infrastructure and to create high-quality jobs. Whether it's the next generation of teachers, doctors, computer engineers or experts in strategically-necessary foreign languages, support for advanced postsecondary study returns multiple benefits to America.

We look forward to working with you throughout the budget process this year to ensure that the federal student aid programs remain an integral part of our nation's economic vitality.

Sincerely,



Molly Corbett Broad
Co-Chairman



David Warren
Co-Chairman

Student Aid Alliance



2011 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
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
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American Student Association of Community Colleges
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Council for Higher Education Accreditation
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