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March 18, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi Speaker of the House U.S. House of Representatives H-232, The Capitol Washington, DC 20515 The Honorable Kevin McCarthy Minority Leader U.S. House of Representatives H-204, The Capitol Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the associations listed below, representing the nation's two- and four-year, public and private colleges and universities and the students they serve, I write in strong support of S. 3503, legislation to ensure that veterans can continue to receive their GI bill benefits in situations where campuses are forced to move courses online due to COVID-19. On Monday, the Senate passed this important, bipartisan legislation by unanimous consent and we ask the House to work quickly to take up and pass the bill.

S. 3503 would grant the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) the authority to continue to provide education benefits for veterans when approved programs of education at colleges and universities are moved online due to an emergency or health-related situation. This authority would be available immediately and would extend through December 21, 2020.

In light of coronavirus challenges, many campuses are working quickly to stand up online classroom instruction as a way to protect students and campus communities and limit contagion. However, moving programs of education online has the potential to significantly and negatively impact the ability of veterans to receive GI bill benefits. As just one example, under current Post-9/11 GI Bill rules, student veterans taking courses online typically receive only half the housing allowance of their on-campus peers. Because most veteran students and their families have already made housing arrangements, including signing leases for the current semester or term, a drastic cut in their living expenses would be a considerable hardship during these already difficult times.

We strongly support efforts to ensure that veterans' educational benefits are not impacted by campus efforts to move coursework online in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that the uncertainty as to when and how these issues will be addressed is particularly hard on our military-connected students. Therefore, we call on the House leadership to call up and quickly pass the bipartisan Senate legislation. We thank you for your leadership on issues impacting veterans and stand ready to work with you and the VA to address other issues impacting military-connected students during these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,

Ted Mitchell President

On behalf of:

ACPA-College Student Educators International ACT, Inc.

American Association of Colleges of Nursing American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers American Association of Community Colleges American Association of State Colleges and Universities American Association of University Professors American College Health Association American Council on Education American Dental Education Association **APPA**, Leadership in Educational Facilities Appalachian College Association Association for Biblical Higher Education Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges Association of American Medical Colleges Association of American Universities Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities Association of Chiropractic Colleges Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of Rhode Island Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania Association of Independent Colleges of Art & Design Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities Association of Public and Land-grant Universities Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry College and University Professional Association for Human Resources **Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges** Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area **Council for Christian Colleges & Universities Council for Higher Education Accreditation Council of Graduate Schools Council of Independent Colleges** Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia Council on Social Work Education **EDUCAUSE** ETS Georgia Independent College Association Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Independent Colleges and Universities of Missouri Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas Independent Colleges of Indiana Independent Colleges of Washington Kansas Independent College Association Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities Maryland Independent College and University Association Michigan Independent Colleges & Universities Minnesota Private College Council NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

National Association of College and University Business Officers National Association of Colleges and Employers National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators National Association of System Heads Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges & Universities Physician Assistant Education Association South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities State Higher Education Executive Officers Association TMCF UPCEA West Virginia Independent Colleges & Universities Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities Yes We Must Coalition