

September 25, 2018

Rep. Paul Ryan
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi,

On behalf of the associations listed below, representing college leaders, educators and professionals, we write offering our strong support for H.R. 6157, particularly the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Labor-Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations measure included in the bill. Following the bipartisan agreement reached in February to set budget caps for FY18 and FY19, we have seen meaningful increases for the programs that make college accessible and promote medical research. We are grateful to Congress for its support of these priorities.

We are particularly supportive of the \$2 billion increase over FY18 for the National Institutes of Health. This investment strengthens our capability to prevent, treat and cure the most challenging health issues and will help to improve not just Americans' quality of life, but our global leadership in this area.

We are also grateful that Congress recognized the importance of Pell Grants and includes an increase of \$100 to the maximum award, raising the overall award to \$6,195. As the cornerstone of federal financial aid, Pell Grants are the primary federal support to over seven million low-income students, and this increase is a welcome adjustment that will help Pell Grants keep pace with inflation. We are concerned that the bill includes a rescission of \$600 million to funds previously provided by Congress for Pell. Events of the last decade have demonstrated the necessity of keeping funding for Pell stable, and drawing down these funds weakens the future health of the program.

In addition, the bill provides \$50 million in new funding for the TRIO programs and \$10 million in new funding for the GEAR UP program. These programs provide the resources to help students with the greatest academic and financial challenges enter college and succeed in their studies. Increases for the Title III and Title V programs that support institutions serving underrepresented populations is a critical investment in these important schools. The provision of \$350 million to allow for Public Service Loan Forgiveness for borrowers who are not currently eligible due to technical reasons, is a valuable continuation of the same funding provided in FY18.

We were also pleased to see that the bill includes several specific provisions of concern to colleges and universities. The bill includes language that allows borrowers to defer their student loan payments without interest while they are receiving treatment for cancer. Other provisions we support include: direction to the Department of Education on funding owed to institutions that participate in the Perkins Loan program; and flexibility for institutions to work with outside organizations to facilitate financial assistance for students.

While we had hoped to see additional increases provided for other key student aid programs such as Federal Work Study and the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, we understand the constraints the allocation imposed upon appropriators. We ask you make the necessary allocations in the future to allow these programs to be restored to their full pre-sequester funding levels, and appreciate that this bill maintains the increases provided in FY18.

We thank you for the efforts made on behalf of higher education and medical research in this bill, and encourage your members to vote in support when it comes to the floor.

Sincerely,



Ted Mitchell
President

On behalf of:

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
Association of American Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Council for Christian Colleges and Universities
Council of Graduate Schools
EDUCAUSE
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities



One Dupont Circle NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 939-9300
acenet.edu

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships
United Negro College Fund, Inc.