

July 5, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole Chairman House Committee on Appropriations H-307 The Capitol Washington, DC 20515 The Honorable Rosa DeLauro Ranking Member House Committee on Appropriations 1036 Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515

## Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of the Student Aid Alliance (SAA), we write to express our deep concerns with the drastic cuts proposed in the fiscal year (FY) 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee funding bill. While we are still waiting to learn of the funding levels for each student aid program, we strongly oppose the reported combined \$1.07 billion cut, equating to a 50% reduction in funding, to both the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program and the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) program.<sup>1</sup>

The FWS and FSEOG programs together provide access to a postsecondary education for over 2 million low-income students nationwide. The FWS program provides over \$1.2 billion in federal and institutional funding. This program supports part-time employment for more than 600,000 financially needy undergraduate and graduate students to help them pay their college costs while gaining valuable work experience. In addition, the FSEOG program serves students with the most need by awarding them additional grant funds, in amounts up to \$4,000, to help them access and complete their postsecondary education. Over 1.6 million low-income students participate in this program, and participating colleges and universities match federal dollars to make more than \$1.2 billion in grant aid available. Cutting funding for the FWS and FSEOG programs by 50% would cause serious harm to the ability of eligible students to access the appropriate level of funding needed to complete their degrees.

We understand the fiscal constraints imposed by the statutory spending caps in the *Fiscal Responsibility Act* (FRA). However, we believe it is imperative that Congress provides additional funding for non-defense discretionary programs beyond the statutory spending caps in the FRA, allowing for a higher allocation in education funding, as the FY 2025 process continues. Overall, this bill falls woefully short of what is in the best interest of students, and we strongly urge you to increase the funding levels for student aid during the full House Committee on Appropriations markup.

document/Labor,%20Health%20and%20Human%20Services,%20Education,%20and%20Related%20Agencies%20Summary.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Committee on Appropriations (Democrats). (2024). Summary of Republican fiscal year 2025 bill. Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, U.S. House of Representatives. <a href="https://democrats-appropriations.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-appropriations.house.gov/files/evo-media-">https://democrats-appropriations.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-appropriations.house.gov/files/evo-media-</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Department of Education. (2024). Fiscal year 2025 budget request.

We appreciate that the Pell Grant maximum award level was not cut and the Pell Grant reserve is maintained. We are also thankful that the bill does not cut the Federal TRIO Programs or GEAR UP. However, we strongly believe that Congress must continue to increase funding for the Pell Grant program and the other federal student aid programs impacting low-income students. The Pell Grant program alone supports over 6 million students and serves as the cornerstone of federal financial student aid.<sup>4</sup>

As we have done before, we call on Congress to continue its bipartisan support of federal student aid programs. These programs play a vital role by providing a much-needed investment in our future leaders.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

**SAA Steering Committee** 

Mark Becker President, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Mul Bele

Kimberly Jones President, Council for Opportunity in Education

Batwan K. Mishred

Barbara K. Mistick President, National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

Barbara R. Snyder President, Association of American Universities

Barbara R. Snyden

Walter G. Bumphus, Ph.D. President and CEO, American Association of Community Colleges

Watts S. Bumphus

E.g. maglione

Beth Maglione Interim President and CEO, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

Ted Mitchell

President, American Council on Education

Dr. Charles L. Welch

President and CEO, American Association of State Colleges and Universities

State Colleges and Universities

## Members of the Student Aid Alliance:

Achieving the Dream

ACPA - College Student Educators International

ACT, Inc.

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

American Association of Community Colleges

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Council on Education

American Federation of Teachers

American Indian Higher Education Consortium

American Psychological Association

**APPA** 

Association of American Universities

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

Association of Community College Trustees

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area

Consortium on Financing Higher Education

Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

Council for Opportunity in Education

Council of Independent Colleges

Council on Social Work Education

**EDUCAUSE** 

NAFSA – Association of International Educators

NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

National Association for College Admission Counseling

National Association of College and University Business Officers

National Association of College Stores

National Association of Colleges and Employers

National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education

National Association of Graduate-Professional Students

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

National College Attainment Network (NCAN)

National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

National Education Association

State Higher Education Executive Officers Association

The Phi Beta Kappa Society

UPCEA – Leaders in Professional, Continuing and Online Education

Work Colleges Consortium

Yes We Must Coalition