

July 19, 2017

Hon. Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Room H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey:

On behalf of the undersigned associations, we write to express our views on the Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill under consideration by your committee. This bill would provide strong support for medical research, and preserves funding for core areas of student financial aid. Despite the challenges imposed by a significantly reduced allocation, we were pleased to see the emphasis your committee has placed on postsecondary education and scientific research.

We are especially grateful for the increase of nearly one billion dollars for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) provided in this bill. When combined with funding made available through the 21st Century Cures Act, and the boosts in FY16 and FY17 appropriations, this increase demonstrates a meaningful commitment to, and a recognition of, the role research plays in improving health and saving lives as well as strengthening our economy and our society. We appreciate the bill includes a provision rejecting the Administration's proposal to cap reimbursements of facilities and administrative costs and reinforcing the importance of supporting infrastructure necessary to conduct NIH research.

For student aid, this bill provides needed increases for the TRIO and GEAR UP programs, which effectively support low-income and first generation students in their pathways to college and help them succeed once enrolled. In addition, by maintaining existing funding levels for Federal Work-Study, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants and the programs supporting Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities this bill ensures that low-income and underserved students will receive the aid necessary to realize their educational goals.

We are concerned however, by the proposed \$3.3 billion rescission to existing funding for the Pell Grant program. Pell Grants are the primary student aid program, providing aid through a well-targeted formula to students with the greatest financial need. As you and the other members of the committee know, these funds were provided by Congress through previous legislation to ensure the stability of the program. If enacted, this proposal, in combination with the \$1.3 billion rescission that was included in the FY17 omnibus, would significantly undermine the health of the Pell Grant program. Of particular concern is the fact that the current inflation-adjusted increase to the maximum award expires this fiscal year. Without this provision, and adequate funding to support it, the

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maximum Pell Grant will stay flat going forward, resulting in diminished purchasing power for the students with the highest need.

These rescissions have been made necessary by a substantial reduction in the overall allocation for this bill. As part of your work in finalizing appropriations for FY18, we would urge you to find a compromise that provides increases to the defense and non-defense spending caps in an equitable manner, making this rescission unnecessary. Such an approach would allow for the restoration of the proposed cuts to workforce training and other education programs which provide critically important pathways to employment. It would also allow for the continuation of funding for programs such as Graduate Assistance for Areas of National Need (GAANN), the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grants, Fulbright Hays grants and Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CCAMPIS). While small, these programs serve specific and important needs that are not addressed by other federal programs. We would urge the committee to reconsider the proposed elimination of these programs.

We thank the committee for the commitment it has demonstrated to higher education. We support moving this bill forward as part of a process that addresses the concerns we have identified, and look forward to working with you to accomplish those goals.

Sincerely,



Molly Corbett Broad
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
American Indian Higher Education Consortium
Association of American Universities
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Council for Opportunity in Education
Council of Graduate Schools
EDUCAUSE
NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships
Thurgood Marshall College Fund
UNCF