

February 25, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi Speaker of the House U.S. House of Representatives Room H-305, The Capitol Washington, DC 20515 The Honorable Kevin McCarthy Minority Leader U.S. House of Representatives Room H-204, The Capitol Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As the House of Representatives moves to consider the reconciliation package on the floor, we write on behalf of America's colleges and universities to express our strong support for this measure.

We are particularly appreciative that nearly \$40 billion is included in the legislation for students and institutions. While this amount falls short of our most recent estimate of at least \$97 billion in student and institutional needs (and is far less than the \$183 billion identified in a recent independent estimate<sup>1</sup>) it represents the largest federal effort so far to address the crippling impact of the pandemic on colleges and universities.

This legislation also continues to provide additional dedicated support to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and other Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) to address the disproportionate effect of the pandemic on those institutions and their students. This is a critical step in the effort to tackle historic funding inequities for these schools, a gap only exacerbated by the pandemic.

In addition, the bill contains a provision amending the current 90/10 rule to close an existing loophole that didn't categorize federal programs for active duty military and veterans' education benefits as federal funding. We have long supported closing this loophole in order to ensure that the rule works as intended.

Finally, earlier versions of the bill included specific language providing institutions the sole authority to determine student eligibility for emergency aid. We understand that the language raised technical issues related to the reconciliation process and had to be removed, but we appreciate the clear expression of support for those students. We strongly believe that the Department of Education already has sufficient authority to ensure that all students harmed by the pandemic are able to receive the help they need.

We urge the House to pass this measure as quickly as possible so that needed relief funds reach students and institutions in a timely manner. Thank you again for your support.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See How to Fight COVID's Financial Crush (<u>https://www.chronicle.com/article/how-to-fight-covids-financial-crush</u>)

COVID Relief Reconciliation Package February 25, 2021

Sincerely,

Ted Mitchell President

On behalf of:

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges **ACPA-College Student Educators International** ACT 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 Association of the Colleges of Nursing American Association of University Professors American College Health Association American Council on Education American Indian Higher Education Consortium APPA, "Leadership in Educational Facilities" Association of American Colleges and Universities Association of American Universities Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Pennsylvania Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities Association of Public and Land-grant Universities Association of Research Libraries Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities Common App **Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges** Council for Advancement and Support of Education Council for Christian Colleges & Universities **Council for Higher Education Accreditation** Council for Opportunity in Education **Council of Graduate Schools Council of Independent Colleges EDUCAUSE** ETS Higher Education Loan Coalition **Higher Learning Commission** 

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators Middle States Commission on Higher Education NAFSA: Association of International Educators 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 Collegiate Athletic Association National Council for Community and Education Partnerships National Council of University Research Administrators New England Commission of Higher Education Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Phi Beta Kappa Society SACSCOC State Higher Education Executive Officers Association UPCEA WASC Senior College & University Commission