

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate

March 15, 2025

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Thune, Leader Jeffries, and Leader Schumer:

As you consider the budget reconciliation package, 101 organizations, institutions, and advocates committed to prioritizing a strong American workforce and economy urge you to support the success of postsecondary students by avoiding harmful cuts to financial aid and public benefits.

It is projected that [by 2031](#), 72 percent of jobs will require postsecondary education. Further 42 percent of all jobs will require at least a bachelor's degree and 29 percent of jobs will require some postsecondary training or an associate's degree. In order to meet employers' current and growing hiring needs, it is essential the American workforce is adequately prepared. Investing in postsecondary education and students' basic needs is an investment in the future success of the American economy.

We ask you to consider the following as you work through the budget reconciliation process:

- **Protect Pell Grants:** Pell Grants have served as the cornerstone of federal financial aid for students from low-income backgrounds, providing crucial support for roughly 7 million students each year. We urge Congress to preserve Pell Grant funding in reconciliation, ensuring the most at risk students are able to receive access to this money and finish their education. Congress should shore up the Pell Grant program, including maintaining eligibility and the current maximum award of \$7,395.
- **Protect Student Loans:** Millions of college students depend on student loans to pursue higher education pathways and become strong contributors to the American workforce. The availability of low-interest student loans and affordable repayment options support the long-term economic growth of the American economy and workforce. We ask Congress to protect the ability of students to receive grant and loan aid that meets their cost of attendance while they're enrolled, and:
 - **Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF):** Employers across the country, including the military and employers in rural regions, rely on PSLF to recruit and retain workers in public and nonprofit positions that provide essential services and can be difficult to fill. The long-term investment in this program provides dividends to the American economy. PSLF eligibility and benefits should be retained for people working in the public and non-profit sectors.
 - **Income-Driven Repayment (IDR):** Every student borrower should have access to an affordable IDR plan with debt forgiveness so that they can meet their monthly payment obligations and

remain in good standing.

- **Risk-Sharing:** Congress should use caution in creating policies that may have the unintended consequence of increasing the cost of postsecondary education and decreasing access to higher education for low-income students. While it is essential that Congress implement and maintain guardrails to protect against predatory behavior, it is just as important to avoid sweeping policies that could have significantly negative impacts.
- **Preserve Federal Programs that Support College Completion:** Food insecurity and medical issues put a student's ability to attain a degree at risk. We recommend Congress preserve:
 - **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** At least two million low-income college students rely on SNAP to cover the high cost of food for themselves and their children. This benefit can mean the difference between a student staying enrolled and dropping out, which often leaves them with debt but no degree. The SNAP program is already extremely difficult for most students to access. Congress should reject any proposal to cut benefits or limit access to SNAP.
 - **Medicaid:** History has shown that when federal funding for Medicaid is slashed, states shift funding away from higher education, resulting in higher costs to students. Congress should consider these implications and maintain Medicaid funding.

Today's students include 37 percent that are older than 25 years old, 49 percent that are financially independent, and 24 percent who are parenting students to build opportunities for their families.

Policies that contribute to degree completion for students who choose to pursue postsecondary education will broaden their career prospects, reduce the likelihood they will need public assistance in their lifetime, and build a competitive economy.

We urge you to reaffirm Congress's historically bipartisan commitment to postsecondary education, today's students, and building a competitive workforce. Thank you for the consideration of these important requests. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,

Today's Students Coalition

#DegreesNYC

10,000 Degrees

Access College Foundation

Achieve Atlanta

AFT, AFL-CIO

Alabama Possible

American Council on Education

America Forward

Association of Community College Trustees

Believe in Students

BLU Educational Foundation

Boys & Girls Club of Dane County	Fulfillment Fund Las Vegas
Breakthrough Central Texas	Generation Hope
CAEL	Goddard Riverside
California Competes	Great Aspirations Scholarship Program
Campaign for College Opportunity	Heights Philadelphia
Carolina Youth Coalition	Higher Expectations for Racine County
Center for Higher Education Policy and Practice at SNHU	Hildreth Institute
College AIM	I know I can
College Beyond	Inside Track
College Now Greater Cleveland	Jeremiah Program
College Success Foundation	KIPP Baltimore
College Community Career	Latino U College Access
College Tracks	LeadMN
Community Bridges, Inc.	LEAP Tampa Bay College Access Network
CUNY University Student Senate	LIFT
Denver Scholarship Foundation	Los Angeles United Methodist Urban Foundation
Detroit College Access Network	Michigan College Access Network
DPS	Middlesex College
DSF	More than Bootstraps
DVP-Praxi LTD	NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
Earn to Learn	National College Attainment Network
Ed Trust Louisiana	Natrona County School District
Edward A Reynolds Transfer High School	New America Higher Education Program
Fair Opportunity Project	Niswonger Foundation
First Generation College Bound	Northern California College Promise Coalition
Florida College Access Network	On Point for College
Florida Impact to End Hunger	One Family
Fulfillment Fund	One Goal

Onward WE Learn

Operation Jump Start

Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon

Partners for Rural Impact

Project GRAD Akron

Puentes New Orleans

RAMC: Rebuilding America's Middle Class

Reach Higher Montana

SchoolHouse Connection

SoCal CAN

Spartanburg Academic Movement

Student Veterans of America

The Denver Scholarship Foundation

The Ed Trust

The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs

The Institute for College Access and Success

The Pittsburgh Promise

Toledo Tomorrow

UAspire

University of California Student Association

UPCEA

Understandingfafsa.org

Washington Food Coalition

Washington's Postsecondary Basic Needs Coalition

Woodward Hines Education Foundation

Yes We Must Coalition

Individuals

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