

March 23, 2023

Honorable Robert Aderholt, Chair  
House Subcommittee on Labor, Health  
and Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
U. S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Chair  
Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health  
and Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
U. S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Mbr  
House Subcommittee on Labor, Health  
and Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
U. S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Shelly Moore Capito, Ranking Mbr  
Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health  
and Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
U. S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the members of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), I write to request your continued support of increased funding for both the federal student aid and institutional aid programs that help low-income students access a higher education and persist to completing their degrees.

Founded in 1976, NAICU serves as the unified voice for the 1,700 private, nonprofit colleges and universities in our nation. Our membership reflects the diversity of private, nonprofit higher education in the U.S and includes major research universities, faith-based colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), art and design colleges, traditional liberal arts and science institutions, women's colleges, work colleges, two-year colleges and schools of law, medicine, engineering, business and other professions.

The federal student aid programs are critical to our students' ability to go to college. We greatly appreciate the increases Congress provided in the final FY 2023 appropriations bill, and that the programs continue to garner bipartisan support.

As you begin the FY 2024 appropriations process, I ask that you consider providing significant increases for the student aid programs. As a member of the Student Aid Alliance Steering Committee, NAICU supports all the student aid programs.

NAICU's top priority is doubling the Pell Grant maximum award to \$13,000. Pell Grants are a proven program that help almost seven million current students and have helped 80 million Americans since the program was created in 1972. Doubling the Pell Grant is the best and most efficient way for Congress to help low-income and first-generation students access and complete college.

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Americans value the Pell Grant program. Recent polling shows that 75% of Americans from across political parties support doubling Pell, and 82% support expanding it. With recent college graduates paying \$3,660 more taxes annually than high school graduates of the same age, continued bipartisan support for increasing the Pell Grant maximum will continue to provide a critical return on investment for our nation's taxpayers.

NAICU also strongly supports the campus-based aid programs, particularly an increase of \$205 million, to \$1.115 billion, for the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant and an increase of \$325 million, to \$1.555 billion, for Federal Work-Study. Together, these campus-based aid programs are matched with institutional dollars to provide up to an additional \$4,000 in grant aid for Pell Grant recipients and campus jobs that help students persist to degree completion without overly burdensome student loan debt.

NAICU also supports increases in all Title III and Title V programs that help strengthen institutions that enroll historically underrepresented students. NAICU has a particular interest in the president's FY 2024 budget request for an additional \$87 million investment, to \$209 million, in Title III-Part A, Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP), which is specifically targeted to low-resource institutions with a high enrollment of low-income students.

The SIP program provides grants to 504 private, nonprofit institutions and helps support the institutions' efforts in such areas as student physical and mental health concerns and food and housing needs. Additional support through the SIP program could go a long way toward maintaining the strength of these institutions and the students they serve.

We are equally supportive of increased funding for HBCUs and MSIs, which play a unique role in the American higher education landscape. The president's FY 2024 request to increase funding for HBCUs to \$402.6 million, Historically Black Graduate Institutions to \$102.3 million, and the HBCU Masters program to \$21 million, is the type of investment these institutions deserve. In addition, the overall increases proposed for MSIs are vital to their continued success in supporting their students on campus.

The private, nonprofit colleges and universities NAICU represents are in every state and nearly every congressional district, serving more than 5.2 million students and graduating 1.1 million students each year. At private, nonprofit colleges, 41% of students are Pell Grant recipients, which is comparable to the 43% of Pell Grant recipients at public four-year colleges. Additionally, 84% of entering students at private, nonprofit colleges and universities receive institutional financial aid.

We are proud to be among the top employers in many of our nation's cities and towns and to be anchors for our communities and regions. The economic impact of the private, nonprofit sector of higher education for academic year 2018-19 totaled \$592 billion, and the sector generated over \$77 billion in tax revenues and supported and sustained 3.4 million jobs.



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The continued bipartisan support for the federal student aid and institutional aid programs is an indicator of the importance of these programs and the positive impact they have on students and institutions. Investments in these programs are vital to our country as we move from COVID relief to economic recovery.

Thank you for considering NAICU's request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara K. Mistick".

Barbara K. Mistick, D. M.

President

cc: House and Senate Appropriations Committee Members