

December 5, 2020



Dear Colleague:

As I mentioned in yesterday's [Washington Update](#), negotiations on a COVID-19 relief bill have resumed in earnest, and Congress is moving quickly to reach a deal by early next week. We are hearing concerning information today that the level of funding being considered for higher education will not come close to meeting the needs of our students and institutions. Negotiators on a bipartisan Senate working group are working this weekend, and we need you to reach out to your elected officials as soon as possible to ensure that any relief package provides the funding needed to meet the growing costs of the pandemic.

It is our understanding that the amount of funding being considered for higher education in the current negotiations could be as low as \$18 billion, with the possibility of half of the resources dedicated to students. This level of funding is considerably lower than the \$29 billion in higher education relief called for in the current Senate Republican bill, which is the baseline for negotiations, and significantly lower than the \$120 billion the higher education community has told Congress is needed.

The 12 Senators on the working group (see below) are working now to finalize funding levels and legislative details. Your elected officials need to hear about the importance of dedicated funding for higher education that includes a more flexible use of funds than was provided in the CARES Act for institutional assistance and student aid. While we had secured improved language in this regard, we have now heard this new gained flexibility is also under discussion.

Please call your elected officials with the following messages:

- Thank you for your tireless work in trying to help our nation survive the pandemic. I know there are ongoing negotiations on a potential COVID relief package, and want to remind you of the urgent needs of my institution.
- I know the bipartisan Senate working group is trying to negotiate a deal this weekend and support for states is being pitted against education (***SEE BELOW FOR FURTHER EXPLANATION**). Please ensure that higher education funds are proportionate with those provided to K-12, as was the case in the CARES Act. These funds should also be distributed through a formula directly to institutions, and not as a pass through to states, which are unlikely to provide equitable allocations to private, nonprofit institutions and students like mine that are not state schools.
- We have faced over (**FILL IN YOUR DOLLAR AMOUNT**) of losses or increased expenses as a result of the pandemic, and our losses for the coming semester will continue.
- We are facing urgent needs around testing, financial aid for students, isolation costs, technology needs, including the expenses of remote and hybrid education, and mental health needs of students, to name a few. (**FILL IN YOUR CAMPUS STORY**)
- We also need more flexible use of funds than was provided in the CARES Act, which limited our ability to use money for some of our most pressing needs. Proposals in the House and Senate have included improved language in this regard, which is now endanger of being changed. Proposals in the House and Senate have included improved language in this regard, but we understand that is now at risk of being lost.
- Thank you for your work on our institution's behalf. It is deeply appreciated.

If you are able to contact your Senators, it is important that you ask them to talk to leadership and to their colleagues on the bipartisan working group about these concerns. If you have a Senator on the working group, your voice is essential. Members of the House should also hear from you as they will have a role to play as well. The Senate working group includes:

Joe Manchin (D-WV)
Mitt Romney (R-UT)
Susan Collins (R-ME)
Mark Warner (D-VA)
Bill Cassidy (R-LA)
Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)

Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
Angus King (I-ME)
Maggie Hassan (D-NH)
Dick Durbin (D-IL)
Marco Rubio (R-FL)
Robert Portman (R-OH)

Thank you for your willingness to quickly reach out to your elected officials in support of your institution, and on behalf of all of private, nonprofit higher education. Your participation in NAICU advocacy is essential to our collective success.

Regards,

Barbara

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