

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 14, 2024

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Chair  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies

Dear Chair Baldwin and Ranking Member Capito:

As you begin your work on Fiscal Year 2025 (FY 2025) appropriations, we urge the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Subcommittee to make sure the discretionary allocation for the Pell Grant effectively meets the needs of students, protects all Pell Grant program reserves, and expands eligibility to students who have been historically excluded or previously cut out from being eligible for the Pell Grant. We respectfully request you provide a discretionary increase to the award as Congress works toward doubling the Pell Grant for students.

We appreciate the LHHS Subcommittee's work to increase the Pell Grant maximum award in recent years. But we remain concerned that the value of the Pell Grant has steadily declined since it was first created – now covering the lowest share of the cost of attendance in its 50-year history. Increasing the maximum award would provide a substantial investment toward reversing this decades-long decline.

The need for Congress to provide robust investment in the Pell Grant program is clear. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, students are still struggling just to meet their basic needs as they pursue higher education. Recently, for example, the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) reported that 29 percent of the students they surveyed were food insecure, and 14 percent were housing insecure. Especially at a time of expected shortfalls in the Pell Grant program, it is critically important that the Subcommittee continues to protect all Pell Grant reserves from any reallocation, raid, or rescission that would hasten any shortfalls in the program. Pell Grant funds should be retained in the program to increase the maximum award, reverse prior eligibility cuts, and provide new opportunities to provide higher education to historically underrepresented students.

The Pell Grant is the cornerstone of federal student aid, and currently helps over 6 million students pursue higher education in the United States. With a continued investment in the Pell Grant, we can better extend educational opportunity to more students from low- and moderate-income families, who will be critical to meeting the demand for a highly educated-workforce.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the Pell Grant. We appreciate your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,



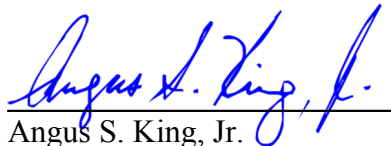
Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



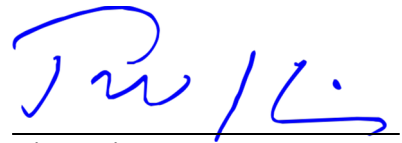
Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



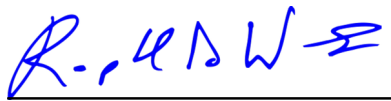
Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



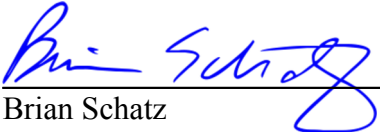
Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator



Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



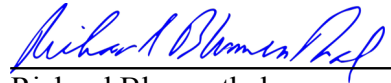
Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



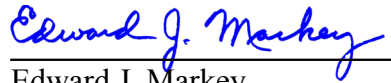
Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



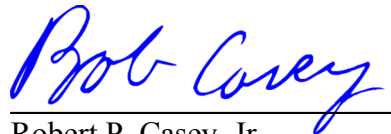
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



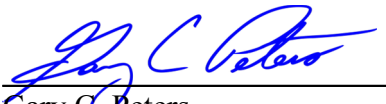
Edward J. Markey  
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Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



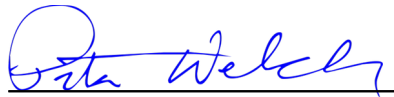
Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



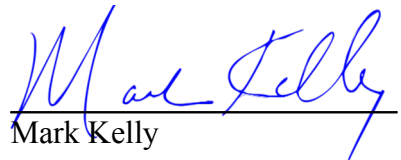
Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Peter Welch  
United States Senator



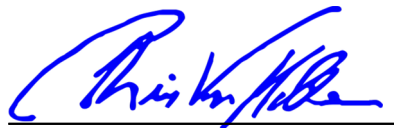
Mark Kelly  
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



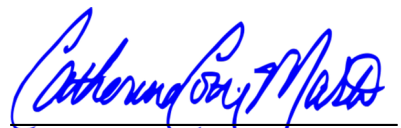
Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



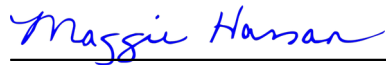
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



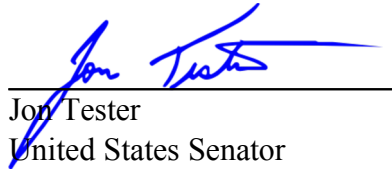
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Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



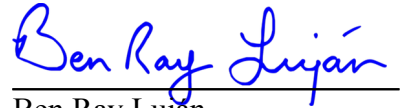
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Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



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Jon Tester  
United States Senator



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Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator



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Tina Smith  
United States Senator



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Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



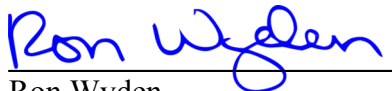
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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



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Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senator



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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator




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Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



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Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



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John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator



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Jacky Rosen  
U.S. Senator



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Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



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Laphonza Butler  
United States Senator