



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES



April 13, 2010

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin:

On behalf of America's community college leadership, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACCT) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), we write in strong support for "Keep our Educators Working Act of 2010." The bill would provide \$23 billion for an "Education Jobs Fund" and be distributed similarly to the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) that was established in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Without substantial financial investments in education jobs, our colleges and students face a grim reality which can be alleviated by these critically important funds.

Community colleges across the country have been facing a "perfect storm," increased enrollments averaging nearly 17% over the past two years coupled with declining state and local aid. The funds from the SFSF in ARRA helped alleviate some of the budgetary problems, but states now face a significant funding cliff without additional funds. Absent any funds, many community colleges will need to cap their enrollments, let go of faculty or dramatically increase tuition and fees. All three of these outcomes are unpalatable for community colleges with approximately 8 million credit students and millions more non-credit students relying on community colleges for education and training to improve their job prospects.

As efforts continue to address the nation's economic problems, community colleges are working to educate and train students of all ages and backgrounds to reach their potential and to help our country renew its economic strength. Greater strategic investments such as the Education Jobs Fund would go a very long way to revitalizing the economy and to staving off crippling job losses.

Thank you for your leadership in introducing this important legislation.

Sincerely,

George R. Boggs
AACCT President and CEO

J. Noah Brown
ACCT President and CEO