



January 27, 2009

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the nation's more than 6,000 publicly appointed and elected leaders who govern the 1,200 community, junior, and technical colleges across the country, we write to express our support for H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. As you may know, community colleges are the largest sector of higher education, and one of the primary services provided by these colleges is workforce training. H.R. 1 provides critically needed funds to strengthen the nation's short-term and long-term economic outlook by supporting vitally important workforce training programs.

The federal government must provide strong leadership to reinvigorate the nation's economy. H.R. 1 is a significant step toward getting the American people back to work. While the United States has been witnessing rising unemployment rates, community colleges are seeing a large influx of new students. Some community colleges have seen double-digit increases in attendance, with students seeking training to improve their job prospects. Community colleges provide vital services that fill this void; however, most colleges are struggling to meet the needs of increasing numbers of students on already-tight or even diminishing budgets, and the low tuition rates of most community colleges is not enough to meet students' and communities' needs. H.R. 1 comes at a critical time, as state support for two-year community-based colleges is dwindling, but the enrollments continue to grow.

H.R. 1 includes a number of items that will provide substantial support for community colleges and their students. Community colleges especially appreciate the funding for state fiscal relief, the Pell grant program, higher-education infrastructure, job-training programs and the creation of the American Opportunity education tax credit. Once the House completes action and begins conference with the Senate, we encourage Congress to support the higher education infrastructure funds for public higher-education institutions—institutions that are publicly accountable.

We thank Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Appropriations Chairman David Obey and Ways and Means Chairman Charles Rangel for their stewardship of this vitally important legislation. We urge the members of the House of Representatives to support and pass this piece of legislation. Please contact Jee Hang Lee, Director of Public Policy, jhlee@acct.org or 202.775.4450, with any questions on these or related issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Noah Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

J. Noah Brown
President & CEO