

July 7, 2015

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senate  
717 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bobby Scott  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1201 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Baldwin and Ranking Member Scott,

On behalf of the Association of Community College Trustees, I write to offer our support for the America's College Promise Act of 2015. In January, President Obama announced his vision to provide free tuition and fees for qualified community college students. The proposal builds upon existing state and local programs, and the introduction of the America's College Promise Act is an important step in making that vision a reality.

Community colleges serve 7.4 million degree seeking students annually, representing 46% of all undergraduate students in the United States. Despite the comparatively low-cost of community college, many students struggle to pay for their education. Additionally, significant state disinvestment over the past several years has put even more responsibility on students and families to pay for higher education. Creating a pathway for free tuition and fees will help break down financial obstacles, and enhance accessibility for individuals who believe that college is financially out of reach.

Investments in community colleges and students have shown to be of great economic and societal benefit. For every public dollar spent on community colleges there is a \$6.80 return in the form of higher tax receipts and less public assistance. Over the course of their careers individuals with an associate's degree will earn nearly \$500,000 more than high school graduates.

We strongly support structuring this program to support low-income Pell Grant students by preserving the availability of the award for full cost of attendance. This will allow students to borrow less, and potentially persist at a faster rate. Additionally, we support requirements that ensure states continue to invest in higher education.

We thank you for your work on this important piece of legislation, and offer our endorsement of the America's College Promise Act of 2015.

Sincerely,



J. Noah Brown  
ACCT President and CEO