



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES



August 17, 2009

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman
House Education and Labor Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller:

On behalf of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACCT), the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), and the undersigned organizations, we write to express our strong support for H.R. 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009. We urge passage of this legislation by the full House. H.R. 3221 supports the goals outlined by President Obama in his American Graduation Initiative by providing substantial funding for community college modernization and program improvement.

H.R. 3221 challenges community colleges to meet ambitious goals. The colleges are eager to attain them. The funds provided in H.R. 3221 should help community colleges graduate substantially more students and meet other national needs as outlined by President Obama earlier this month, and echoed by many other parties. The legislation comes at a time of unprecedented enrollment increases and funding limitations on our campuses, along with deep concern about the country's economic future.

Some of the bill's highlights include:

- **Community College Modernization**

The legislation's \$2.5 billion for community college modernization represents critical funding for renovation, repair and modernization. With the rapid rise in community college enrollments and a huge backlog of unaddressed facilities needs, federal funding is critical in helping the institutions educate and train the citizens of the 21st century.

- **American Graduation Initiative**

This historic, \$6.8 billion in federal aid to community colleges and states will help community colleges strengthen their academic programs, developmental education offerings, job training programs, student support services, articulation agreements and dual enrollment courses. Colleges and states are being asked to set and meet ambitious new standards in exchange for receiving funds.

- **Pell Grant Maximum Increase**

The Pell Grants program remains essential for providing higher education access for low-income students. The program now serves 7 million students annually. The vast majority of

these students come from families with very modest incomes and in most instances could not otherwise afford to attend college. H.R. 3221 substantially increases the maximum Pell Grant each year, with a projected \$6,910 maximum grant in FY 2019.

- **FAFSA Simplification**

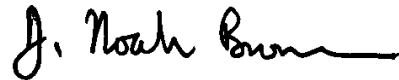
H.R. 3221 streamlines the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). For far too long, the unnecessarily complex FAFSA has proved to be a barrier for access to critical federal student aid, particularly for community college students. The changes will reduce the time needed to complete these forms and help more students access financial aid.

We would like to express our strong support for this vital bill. We look forward to working to House passage and enactment later this year.

Sincerely,



George R. Boggs
AACC President and CEO



J. Noah Brown
ACCT President and CEO

Signed on behalf of:

American Association of Community Colleges
Association of Community College Trustees

Arizona Community College Presidents Council
Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges
California Community Colleges
Colorado Community College System
Community College League of California
Community College System of New Hampshire
Connecticut Community Colleges
Delaware Community and Technical College
Florida Association of Community Colleges
Florida Community College System
Illinois Community College Board
Illinois Community College Trustees Association
Iowa Association of Community College Trustees
Iowa Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation
Kansas Association of Community College Trustees
Kentucky Community and Technical College System
Maine Community College System
Maryland Association of Community Colleges
Massachusetts Community Colleges
Michigan Community College Association

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
Montana University System
Nebraska Community College Association
New Jersey Council of County Colleges
New Mexico Association of Community Colleges
New York Community College Trustees
North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees
North Carolina Community College System
Ohio Association of Community Colleges
Oregon Community College Association
Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce
Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges
South Carolina Association of Technical College Commissioners
South Carolina Technical College System
The State University of New York
Texas Association of Community Colleges
Utah Community Colleges
Virginia Community College System
Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
Washington State Trustees Association for Community and Technical Colleges
West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education
Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association
Wisconsin Technical College System