



June 5, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Blunt, Vice Chairman Leahy, and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of the nation's more than 1,100 community colleges and their students, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) request your continued support for essential programs that create higher education opportunity and prepare the nation's workforce.

We would like to reiterate our thanks for the investments in students, colleges, and the nation's workforce in fiscal year (FY) 2018 appropriations legislation. Federal investments in student aid and institutional support are essential to our institutions' mission to educate the citizenry, prepare workers for better jobs, and provide a myriad of services to local communities. The top community college federal funding priorities for FY 19 include:

Increase the Federal Pell Grant Maximum

Pell Grants are the most important form of financial aid for community college students, helping nearly 2.3 million access and succeed in higher education each year. We greatly appreciate the substantial increase to the maximum award in FY 18, and we urge you again to raise the maximum award level in FY 19, to maintain the grant's purchasing power and foster student success. The Pell Grant reserve fund should be maintained, and if necessary additional discretionary funds should be added to ensure the Pell Grant program does not encounter a shortfall in the coming years.

Support Under-Resourced Institutions and Students

We thank the committee for the FY 18 funding increase for the Strengthening Institutions Program (Title III-A). Community colleges receive a majority of program funds. Title III-A helps colleges expand their capacity to serve low-income students by providing funds to improve and strengthen their academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability. Funds may be used for institutional planning, faculty development, strengthening endowments, and other purposes. Academic programs and internal management are also supported. Many recent grantees have focused on enhancing student completion, and priority is given to evidence-based proposals. We ask the committee to again increase funding for Title III-A in FY 19, as the program remains fiercely competitive and is \$36 million below its FY 09 authorized level.

Enhance the Perkins Act Career and Technical Education Programs

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (CTE) programs are the largest ongoing source of federal institutional support for community colleges, helping them improve all aspects of cutting-edge CTE programs. Colleges use grants to prepare students for high-skill, in-demand fields by helping them to meet challenging academic and technical standards; improve curricula; purchase the equipment students need to know how to use in today's jobs; integrate technical and academic instruction; and foster better links between colleges and the business community. Increased FY 18 funding will help community colleges identify and address occupational education priorities and fund innovation. We urge Congress to provide at least an inflationary increase in funding for this program in FY 19.

Help Parents Attend College

Over 20 percent of all undergraduate students have at least one dependent child (NPSAS:16). Lack of accessible and affordable childcare is a significant barrier to persistence for many students. The Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program helps low-income parents attend college by providing needed campus-based child care. We thank you for the significant FY 18 funding increase, which will help meet the great demand for support, and encourage you to increase funding again in FY 19.

Strengthen Workforce Development and Adult Basic Education

Millions of jobs remain unfilled because businesses cannot find workers with adequate skills. Federal workforce education programs help displaced workers and others navigate the changing economy and fill these jobs. We request that funding for grant programs under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) receive at least an inflationary increase for FY 19.

Adult Basic Education State Grants help serve 1.8 million participants each year to gain reading, numeracy and English literacy aptitudes, and undertake GED preparation. However, demand for these programs far outstrips supply, as tens of thousands of individuals remain on waitlists. We request that these programs be increased by at least inflation in FY 19.

Additional Funding Priorities for Community Colleges

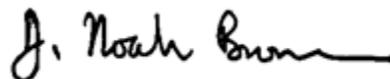
Community colleges strongly support Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Work Study, international education, the federal TRIO and GEAR UP programs, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, and other programs supporting Minority Serving Institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Cuts to these programs could have a harsh impact on student access and success. We ask for at least an inflationary increase for these programs in FY 19.

We thank you for your consideration of these views. We look forward to working with you during the FY 19 appropriations process and in making the essential work of community colleges a national priority.

Sincerely,



Walter G. Bumphus
AACC President and CEO



J. Noah Brown
ACCT President and CEO