

July 14, 2016

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

Dear Ranking Member Scott,

On behalf of the nation's more than 1,100 community colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) write to state our support for the "File Once FAFSA Act" of 2016. We thank you for your work on this important issue.

Community colleges serve 7.4 million degree seeking students annually, representing 45% of all U.S. undergraduates. Despite their relatively low annual tuition and fees of \$3,435 for a full-time student, many students struggle to pay for their education. This is partially due to the fact that the cost of attendance at a community college also encompasses course materials, room and board, transportation, and other living expenses.

Completion of a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is essential for the many community college students who need federal support to meet their educational expenses. Unfortunately, only 61 percent of community college students apply for federal aid. For this reason, requiring dependent students to only file the FAFSA once, as in your legislation, should substantially increase application for aid. This is an extremely important objective.

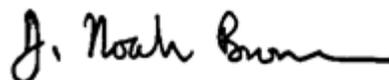
To provide further context: there are many reasons why students do not complete the FAFSA, including the well-known complexity of the form. Furthermore, most community college students under the age of 24 years old are categorized as dependent, in reality they are financially independent from their parents. For those students, obtaining annual tax information from their parents can present a substantial barrier to FAFSA completion. Finally, we note that the low-income students are unlikely to have annual earnings that fluctuate significantly. All these factors make your legislation extremely desirable for community colleges, which enrolls higher percentages of low-income students than any other in traditional higher education.

Access to federal financial aid remains an important topic as the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act proceeds. AACC and ACCT are pleased to offer our endorsement for the File Once FAFSA Act of 2016.

Sincerely,



Walter G. Bumphus  
AACC President and CEO



J. Noah Brown  
ACCT President and CEO