



May 14, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

On behalf of the nation's 1,050 community colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) thank you for your leadership in introducing the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act.

The legislation goes far in assisting our colleges in promoting student success in the midst of the pandemic. We are particularly grateful for the strong support for community colleges provided through the State Education Stabilization Fund. This will help colleges cope with expected budget reductions, decreased revenue, increased costs stemming from the transition to distance education, and COVID-19 mitigation efforts. The state maintenance-of-effort provisions should help mitigate the impact of collapsing state finances on our institutions. We do hope that, as the bill moves forward, the allocation for higher education within the education fund can be increased from the current 30%. This would better reflect the financial needs of our members.

We appreciate the bill's clarification of student eligibility, which will enable colleges to provide much-needed assistance to all our students, including international students, DACA recipients, Dreamers, and others. The bill also allows institutions to use stabilization funds much more flexibly, and effectively, than those provided through the CARES Act. This is an essential improvement in the bill.

Many community college students face financial challenges that will likely last beyond this pandemic. Therefore, we support the bill's one-year extension of student loan borrower relief provided in the CARES Act, and for providing debt forgiveness. This will help them as they navigate the economy and launch or continue their careers. Our students will also benefit greatly knowing that any emergency grants they receive as a result of the pandemic will not be taxed and will not count against their future financial aid.

In addition, we greatly appreciate the financial assistance provided to colleges through the Title III and Title V programs, along with allocation requirements that will effectively distribute funds. These programs are an efficient way of targeting assistance on colleges that serve high percentages of diverse and financially needy student populations, with fewer resources than other institutions.



We hope that the legislation will ultimately include dedicated investments in community college training. This could be achieved in part through the Community Colleges and Industry Partnership Grants included in the Relaunching America's Workforce Act, which if funded would help ensure that the country has workforce trained and ready to take well-paying jobs when the nation recovers from COVID-19.

We look forward to working with you as this legislation moves forward and in any future COVID-19 legislation. Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Walter G. Bumphus, Ph.D.
AACCC President and CEO

J. Noah Brown
ACCT President and CEO