

April 22, 2021

The Honorable Brendan Boyle
US House of Representatives
1133 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

On behalf of the public and private higher education sector in Pennsylvania, we urge you to bring an affordable, high-quality college education within reach for all students by doubling the maximum Pell Grant. Nationally, this long overdue investment will drive economic recovery, help address racial and economic inequities in college completion rates and increase overall educational attainment. In Pennsylvania, this approach would increase access for students and help to reduce overall student debt. Bottom line, these dollars reach the students most in need, allowing them to achieve their educational goals.

The Pell Grant program is the nation's foundational investment in higher education, now in its 50th year. Pell Grants help almost 200,000 students from Pennsylvania attend and complete college annually. Students from all 50 states and all corners of this state--from our rural communities to cities to everywhere in between--rely on the Pell Grant program to build their future. Pell Grants are especially critical for students of color, with nearly 60 percent of Black students, half of American Indian or Alaska Native students, and nearly half of Latinx students receiving a Pell Grant each year.

However, the share of college costs covered by the grant is at an all-time low. At its peak, the maximum grant covered three-quarters of the cost of attending a four-year public college. Now, it covers less than one-third of that cost. Unsurprisingly, Pell Grant recipients continue to bear disproportionate student debt burdens. Pell Grant recipients today are more than twice as likely as other students to have student loans, and grant recipients who borrow graduate with over \$4,500 more debt than their higher-income peers.

Students from low- and moderate-income families are in critical need of additional grant aid to pay for college. Doubling the maximum Pell Grant--and permanently indexing the grant to inflation to ensure its value doesn't diminish over time--will boost college enrollment, improve graduation rates, and honor the history and value of these grants as the keystone federal investment in college affordability. Expanding the grant would ensure that more working-class families are served through the program.

As Pennsylvania's representatives in Congress, we know that you share the pride in the success of Pennsylvania's unique, world class higher education landscape. We stand ready to assist you in support.

Sincerely,



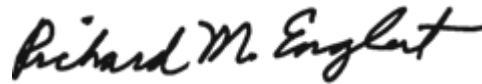
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