

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 15, 2023

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you begin work on this year's Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we ask that you provide robust funding for the Federal Pell Grant Program in Fiscal Year 2024 in order to facilitate increasing the maximum individual award to \$13,000. We also ask that appropriators secure the long-term affordability impact of the Pell Grant program for years to come by indexing the maximum award amount to inflation and ensuring that funding for the program is fully mandatory, rather than discretionary. These policy changes will ensure that the financial support the Pell Grant program provides to students as they pursue higher education will be insulated from market changes or budget shortfalls.

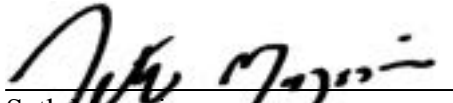
We applaud the Committee for increasing the maximum annual Pell Grant to \$7,395 for the 2023-2024 award year, reflecting an increase of \$500 and the largest increase in 10 years. However, this still falls short of what is needed to make college affordable to the lowest-income students. Congress must increase the annual Pell Grant to \$13,000, which on average would cut student debt at least in half for eligible recipients, helping an estimated 25.2 million students per year.¹ Despite being the cornerstone of our nation's student financial aid system, Pell Grants today cover less than one-third of the average cost of attendance at a public four-year university, which is the lowest share of tuition in the program's history. Increased tuition costs, as well expenses like textbooks, housing, food, and transportation, have drastically diminished Pell's purchasing power. This places greater strain on the students and families that the program was designed to help. Increasing the maximum Pell Grant will significantly improve the award's purchasing power, thus ensuring it will truly benefit the students and families that need it most.

For nearly 50 years, Pell Grants have provided much needed financial assistance to low-income families, unlocking higher education opportunities for millions of students. Because these grants are awarded solely based upon a student's financial need and do not have to be repaid, they are often the only vehicle available to low- and moderate-income students to pay for a college education. Strengthening the program will not only make college more affordable, but it will also improve outcomes by providing grant recipients more opportunity to focus on school, helping them cover their basic needs, and eliminating barriers to completion. Helping low- and moderate-income students obtain a college degree will promote equity and strengthen our communities, workforces, and nation. This investment will reinforce our national commitment to promoting opportunity to obtain a college education regardless of family income.


Thank you again for your attention to this critical issue. We look forward to working with you on ways to expand access to a quality higher education.

¹ <https://thegepi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/GEPI-Tackling-Student-Debt-Crisis.pdf>


Sincerely,




Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



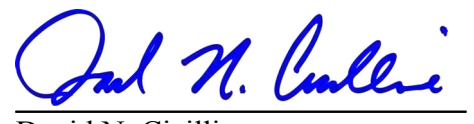
Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



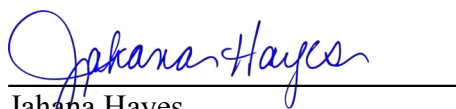
Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress




Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



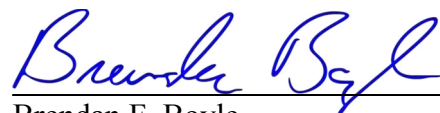
Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



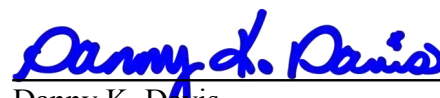
Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle
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Chris Deluzio
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Mark DeSaulnier
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David Scott
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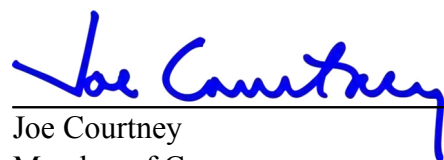
Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
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Adam Smith
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Bill Foster
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James P. McGovern
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Marilyn Strickland
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Lizzie Fletcher
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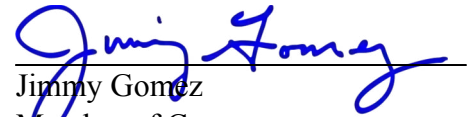
Seth Moulton
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Jake Auchincloss
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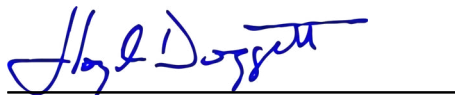
Jimmy Gomez
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Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress
, Committee on Ways and Means



Vicente Gonzalez
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Lloyd Doggett
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Joaquin Castro
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Debbie Dingell
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Chellie Pingree
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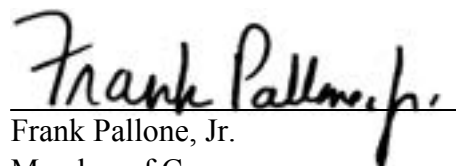
Mike Levin
Member of Congress



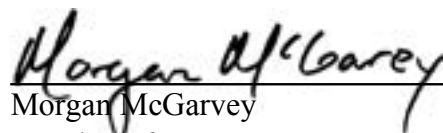
Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



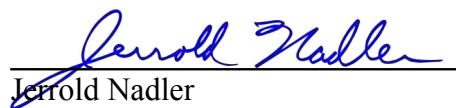
Mike Thompson
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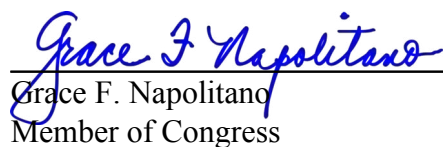
Frank Pallone, Jr.
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Morgan McGarvey
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Jerrold Nadler
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Grace F. Napolitano
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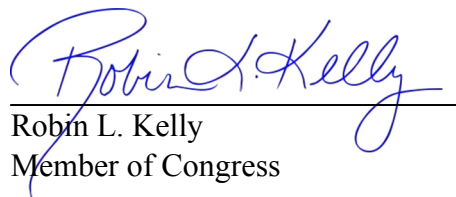
Rashida Tlaib
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Gwen S. Moore
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Brian Higgins
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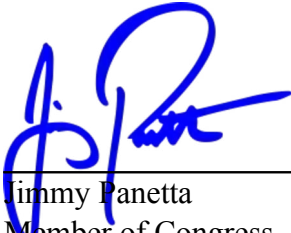
Robin L. Kelly
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Ann McLane Kuster
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Emanuel Cleaver, II
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Jimmy Panetta
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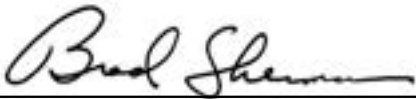
Rick Larsen
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Deborah K. Ross
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Judy Chu
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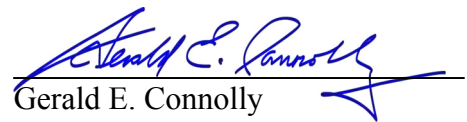
Brad Sherman
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Chris Pappas
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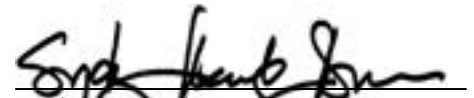
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



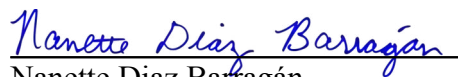
Gerald E. Connolly
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Suzan K. DelBene
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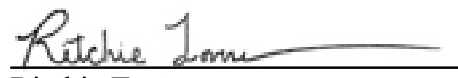
Sydney Kamlager-Dove
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Nanette Diaz Barragán
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Jason Crow
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Ritchie Torres
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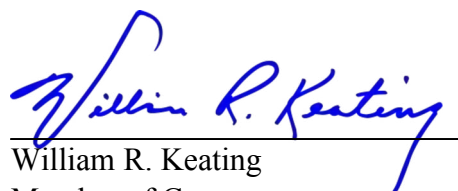
Katie Porter
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Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
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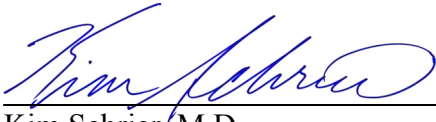
Sean Casten
Member of Congress



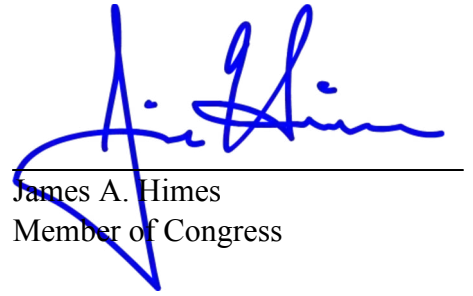
William R. Keating
Member of Congress



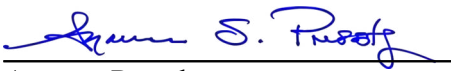
Steve Cohen
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James A. Himes
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Ayanna Pressley
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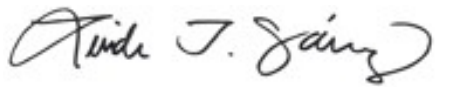
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Subcommittee
on Higher Education and
Workforce Development



Jim Costa
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Raul Ruiz, M.D.
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Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



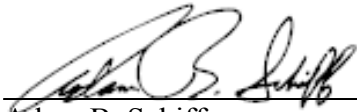
Lisa Blunt Rochester
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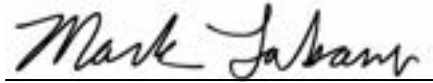
Salud Carbajal
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Tony Cardenas
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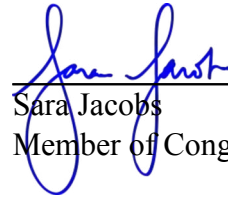
Adam B. Schiff
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Dan Goldman
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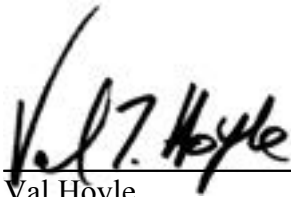
Sara Jacobs
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Madeleine Dean
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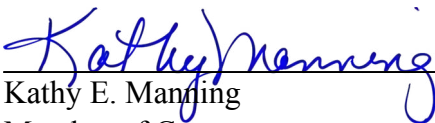
Jamie Raskin
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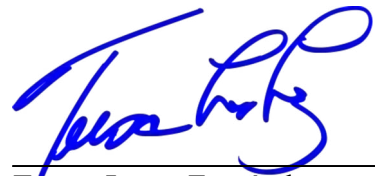
Val Hoyle
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Sharice L. Davids
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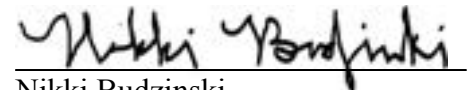
Kathy E. Manning
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Juan Vargas
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Patrick Ryan
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Ruben Gallego
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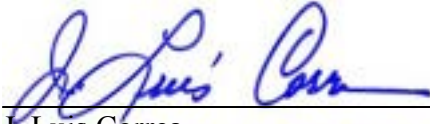
Zoe Lofgren
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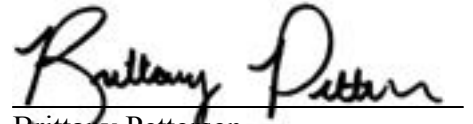
John P. Sarbanes
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Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



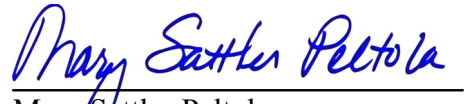
J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



Mary Sattler Peltola
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress