

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 11, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

Thank you for your swift and robust action to alleviate the health and economic impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). As you prepare for a fourth economic relief package, we respectfully urge you to provide \$47 billion in financial support for students and institutions of higher learning.

Higher education provides a ladder of economic opportunity to our nation's students while also building a globally competitive workforce. Colleges and universities are also pillars of communities. Across the entire higher education sector, institutions last year directly employed 3.6 million individuals. Additionally, research universities are at the forefront in searching for scientific solutions to some of society's greatest challenges, including COVID-19. These immense contributions to society are at grave risk without additional support.

Congress responded in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to the emergency financial needs of students, colleges, and universities by providing \$14 billion in support through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund. However, students and institutions are experiencing vastly greater need. Students are facing complex financial emergencies that threaten their ability to remain on their path to degree completion. The needs are particularly pronounced for students of color, low-income students, veterans, and first generation college students. Colleges and universities have taken immediate steps to protect individual health by shifting to remote learning platforms so students can maintain academic progress during the disruption, but face massive increases in expenses combined with a precipitous decline in revenue.

In addition to the substantial costs and losses already faced by institutions, the threat of ongoing financial uncertainty stemming from enrollment declines and state cuts threaten the financial stability of schools. The situation requires significant additional emergency relief from Congress. Congress should also provide more flexibility in the use of funds to ensure that federal investment can be effectively targeted by colleges and universities to meet the needs of students and communities.

We thank you for your support of these critical investments in our nation's students and institutions of higher learning.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jeffrey A. Merkley
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

/s/ Thomas R. Carper
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

/s/ Tammy Duckworth

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

/s/ Cory A. Booker

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

/s/ Sherrod Brown

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher A. Coons

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

/s/ Jack Reed

Jack Reed
United States Senator

/s/ Tina Smith

Tina Smith
United States Senator

/s/ Edward J. Markey

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

/s/ Ron Wyden

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Baldwin

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

/s/ Richard J. Durbin

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

/s/ Benjamin L. Cardin

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

/s/ Jeanne Shaheen

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

/s/ Sheldon Whitehouse

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

/s/ Richard Blumenthal

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

/s/ Robert Menendez

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

/s/ Tim Kaine

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

/s/ Margaret Wood Hassan

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

/s/ Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

/s/ Debbie Stabenow

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

/s/ Dianne Feinstein

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

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/s/ Elizabeth Warren

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

/s/ Mark R. Warner

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

/s/ Gary C. Peters

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

/s/ Kyrsten Sinema

Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

/s/ Kamala D. Harris

Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

/s/ Tom Udall

Tom Udall
United States Senator

/s/ Martin Heinrich

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

/s/ Amy Klobuchar

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator