

February 27, 2024

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

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, Leader McConnell, and Leader Jeffries:

Access to reliable and fast internet is not a luxury for today's college students; it is essential to their academic success. Like most Americans, college students rely on internet services every day to connect with colleagues and faculty, conduct research and complete coursework. And, many students need reliable internet to go to class. In 2021, 60 percent of undergraduate students — more than 9 million people — took at least one class online. However, access to reliable and affordable broadband access for the lowest-income students, those receiving the Pell Grant, is now in jeopardy. We urge you to extend the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) with continued funding in the next appropriations legislation.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress recognized that broadband access is crucial for all Americans, regardless of your income. In the creation of the Emergency Broadband Program and subsequently the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), Congress provided financial assistance for eligible households, including those receiving a Pell grant, in the form of a \$30 a month subsidy. This support has helped more than 1 million college students access learning tools and coursework online. However, without additional appropriations, this crucial program is set to end in the coming months.

Thirty dollars a month is meaningful for today's college students, many of whom are already living with limited financial means. In 2020, approximately 4 in 10 college students received a Pell grant; 22% reported low or very low food security; and nearly 8% experienced homelessness or were at risk of homelessness. Losing access to broadband benefits could mean choosing between schoolwork or food, or cause a student to stop out all together.

We ask that Congress continue this important support for many Americans, including college students receiving the Pell Grant, by providing robust appropriations for the Affordable Connectivity Program in the next appropriations legislation. Doing so will ensure that students will be able to stay online, and get one step closer to earning their degree or credential.

Supporting today's students by providing access to resources that are critical for their learning—including broadband—is paramount to their success. Thank you for your support and consideration.

Sincerely,

Higher Learning Advocates  
Center for Higher Education Policy and  
Practice at Southern New Hampshire  
University  
uAspire  
National College Attainment Network  
Benefits Data Trust  
America Forward  
American Council on Education  
Association of Community College Trustees  
Basic Needs Oregon  
Bennington College  
Beyond 12  
Breakthrough Central Texas  
Center for First-generation Student Success  
Clark State College  
College Success Foundation  
Community Food Bank of San Benito  
County  
Complete College America  
Council for Adult and Experiential Learning  
DVP-PRAXIS LTD  
EduOptimists LLC  
Food for People  
Generation Hope  
Green Mountain United Way  
Hunger Free Colorado  
Hunger Free Vermont  
Institute for Higher Education Policy  
JW1  
Let's Get Ready  
Middle States Commission on Higher  
Education

*Individuals*

Glendarika Garcia  
Cristian Reyes  
Rashiadah Weaver  
Jerry Lawson

More Than Bootstraps  
NASPA  
National Association of State Student  
Grant & Aid Programs  
National Education Association  
National Institute for Learning Outcomes  
Assessment  
National Skills Coalition  
New America's Open Technology Institute  
Northern California College Promise  
Coalition  
Rally Cat's Cupbard  
Southern California College Attainment  
Network  
State Higher Education Officers Association  
Student Basic Needs Coalition  
Student Defense  
Student Veterans of America  
The Education Trust  
The Hope Center for College, Community  
and Justice  
The Institute for College Access & Success  
The Learning Accelerator  
Third Way  
Today's Students Coalition  
Trellis Strategies  
UPCEA  
Western Governors University  
William E. Morris institute for Justice  
Young Invincibles

John Hawkins  
Joshua Williams  
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