

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 21, 2026

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Vice Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chair Capito, and Ranking Member Baldwin:

As you begin your work on Fiscal Year (FY) 2027, we write to request that the federal Pell Grant program be provided with enough funding to continue its mission serving students, especially as Workforce Pell implementation draws near. This bipartisan program is facing a funding shortfall that could harm students, colleges and universities, and our economy. We know that when we invest in postsecondary education, we are unlocking potential for millions.

The Pell Grant program was created in a bipartisan manner to help low-income students access higher education and is the single largest source of federal aid for these students. Based on available data, more than 6.5 million students received a Pell Grant for the academic year 2022-2023.¹ Then, last summer, the bipartisan Workforce Pell proposal was passed and will take effect in July 2026. This will open up the Pell Grant to students pursuing short-term, career-focused job training programs, and it is important that there is adequate funding to accommodate these new students.

As the Pell Grant program continues to grow and reform to address trends and needs of postsecondary education and the labor market, the demand also grows. Despite efforts in H.R. 1 to address the Pell Grant shortfall, the Congressional Budget Office released new projections, revealing a nearly \$17 billion shortfall for FY 2027.² Without immediate action, the program would face options such as eligibility cuts that could hurt the most vulnerable students. As champions of Workforce Pell, it is disappointing to face this reality just as the decade-long push for passage and implementation is within reach.

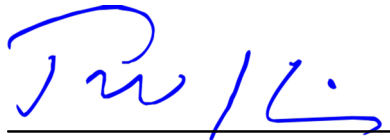
¹ <https://educationdata.org/pell-grant-statistics>

² <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2026-02/51304-2026-02-pellgrant.pdf>

Investing in the Pell Grant program comes at a crucial time for our economy. Postsecondary attainment is becoming essential for the workforce, with a recent estimate showing that 72% of jobs will require some form of postsecondary credential by 2031.³ States have increased their investments in short-term credentials, with 32 states putting more than \$5.6 billion in these initiatives.⁴ The federal government's commitment to expand Pell Grants to high-quality, short-term workforce development and training programs will be a boon to industries that rely most on these programs, such as health care, IT/cybersecurity, and the skilled trades, as long as the program is adequately funded.

Thank you for your work to support students. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

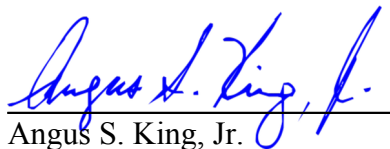
Sincerely,



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator




Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator

³ <https://www.ecs.org/data-driving-effective-nondegree-credentials>

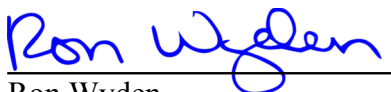
⁴ https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62bdd1bbd6b48a2f0f75d310/t/672549d2c51bcd00c9c0f9cc/1730496979314/HCM_Short-term+Credentials+Update_112024.pdf



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



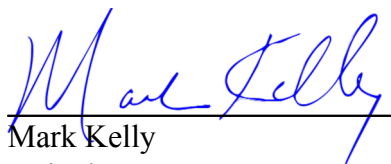
Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator