

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 21, 2026

The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Baldwin:

As you begin drafting the Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations bill for the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, we write to express our continued support for the Postsecondary Student Success Grants program (PSSG), which bolsters college retention and completion initiatives. This investment will pay dividends to local economies through stronger employment outcomes, and reduce the “skills gap” between available jobs and qualified candidates. PSSG has received funding in four prior bipartisan fiscal year budget agreements, including \$45 Million appropriated for the program in the FY26 LHHS appropriations bill. Given this, we propose an investment of at least \$55 million in the PSSG program in recognition of the fact that more federal funding is needed to ensure that students who begin a two-, four-, or post-graduate degree program complete those programs

Currently, regions across the U.S. face a “skills” gap between qualified candidates and available jobs. This gap is especially significant for jobs requiring more than a high school degree but less than a postgraduate degree. At the same time, completion rates for two- and four-year degrees continue to be low, with non-degrees adversely impacting workforce participation. PSSG addresses these issues by building higher education institutional capacity through evidenced-based strategies to graduate more students prepared to enter the workforce. Rigorous research demonstrates that when higher education institutions use comprehensive approaches to student success and provide academic, career, and personal services they can improve postsecondary outcomes and graduation rates. For example, studies have shown that the CUNY program nearly doubled the three-year graduation rate for associate degree students, and Bottom Line students were eight percentage points more likely to graduate with a bachelor’s degree within five years of high school graduation. These programs offer replicable models that can be scaled through large-scale investment in a Postsecondary Student Success Grants program.

To date, 22 grants have been awarded at more than 40 institutions. The initial \$5 million in competitive PSSG awards in FY22 enabled 5 institutions in Florida, New Jersey, South Carolina, and Texas to implement and scale programs to strengthen student retention and completion. Subsequent \$45 million allocations for PSSG in each of the FY23 and FY24 expanded these vital interventions to grantees in California, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Texas. Continued investment is essential to sustain and expand high-impact student success practices, particularly those meeting the high bar for

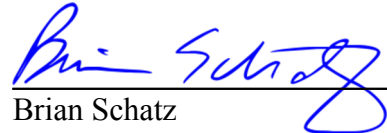
receiving an “expansion” grant under the Education Innovation and Research program based on prior effectiveness.

Investing \$55 million to strengthen evidence-based Postsecondary Student Success Grants will close workforce skill gaps, bolstering our economy and our nation’s future.

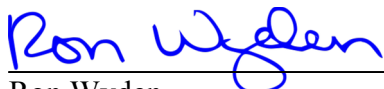
Sincerely,



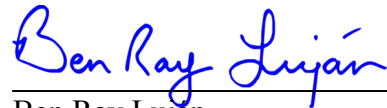
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



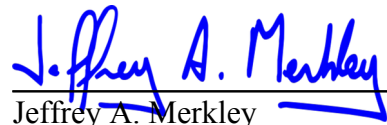
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United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



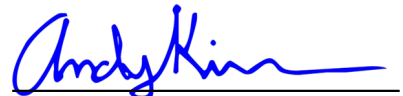
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



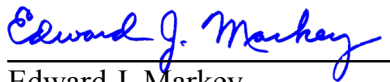
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United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Andy Kim
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Edward J. Markey
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Cory A. Booker
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Chris Van Hollen
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