

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
Derek Price
Brienne Camacho

Karla Weber Wandel
Emily Portillo
Nicole Reilly
Asheena Moses
Debbi Richards
Michelle Rodda

Jo Blondin
Patricia Jaquez
Zoe Cooper-Caroselli
Maeve Forbes
Michelle Rodda
Alexander Hazzard