April 26, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the members of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), I write to request your continued support of increased funding for the federal student aid programs and institutional aid programs that help low-income students have access to higher education and persist to degree completion.

NAICU is the national public policy association for the nation’s private, nonprofit colleges and universities. Reflecting the diversity of private, nonprofit higher education in the U.S. our member institutions include major research universities, faith-based colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Minority-Serving Institutions and Tribal Colleges and Universities, art and design colleges, traditional liberal arts and science institutions, women’s colleges, work colleges, two-year colleges and schools of law, medicine, engineering, business and other professions.

With more than 1,700 private nonprofit colleges serving more than 5.2 million students, the private, nonprofit colleges and universities we represent are in every state and nearly every congressional district making a vast economic impact on the communities we serve. At private, non-profit colleges, 38% of students are Pell Grant recipients, which is comparable to the 40% of students at public four-year colleges, and 83% of students receive institutional financial aid.

The federal student aid programs are critical to our students’ ability to go to college. We greatly appreciate the increases Congress provided in the final FY 2022 appropriations bill, and that the programs continue to garner bipartisan support.
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As you begin the FY 2023 appropriations process, I ask that you consider providing significant increases for the student aid programs. As a co-chair of the Student Aid Alliance, we support their request for all the student aid programs. NAICU’s top priority is doubling the Pell Grant maximum award to $13,000. Pell Grants help almost seven million current students and have helped 80 million students since it was created in 1972. Within this year of celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Pell Grant program, Congress has a unique opportunity to reinforce its bipartisan support for this foundational student aid program.

NAICU also strongly supports an increase of $195 million, to $1.090 billion, for the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), and an increase of $302 million, to $1.52 billion for Federal Work Study (FWS). Together, these campus-based aid programs are matched with institutional dollars to provide up to an additional $4,000 in grant aid for Pell Grant recipients, and campus jobs that help students persist to degree completion without overly burdensome student loan debt.

NAICU supports increases in all of the Title III and Title V programs that help institutions that enroll historically underrepresented students stay strong, so their students can succeed. NAICU has a particular interest in the president’s FY 2023 budget request for an additional $100 million investment in Title III-Part A, Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP), which is specifically targeted to low-resource institutions with a high enrollment of low-income students. The SIP program includes 610 private, non-profit institutions that include institutions that continue to struggle with high student need; student physical and mental health concerns; and food and housing needs. Additional support through the SIP program could go a long way towards maintaining the strength of these institutions.

We are equally supportive of increased funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), which play a unique role in the American higher education landscape. The President’s FY 2023 request to increase funding for HBCUs to 402.6 million, Historically Black Graduate Institutions to $102.3 million, and the HBCU Masters program to $21 million is the type of investment these institutions deserve. In addition, the overall increases proposed for MSIs are vital to their continued success in supporting their students on campus.

The continued bipartisan support for the federal student aid and institutional aid programs is an indicator of the importance of these programs and the type of impact they have on students. This type of investment is critical as our country moves from COVID relief to economic recovery.

Thank you for considering NAICU’s request.

Sincerely,

Barbara K. Mistick, D. M.
President

cc: House and Senate Appropriations Committee Members