



The Commission on
INDEPENDENT
Colleges & Universities
in New York



The State University
of New York



September 9, 2021

Dear New York State Congressional Delegation Member:

For nearly 50 years, Pell Grants have been the centerpiece of federal student aid. It is time to reinvest in this critical program for the sake of the students, families, and communities who depend on it.

We call on Congress to demonstrate its commitment to students by increasing Pell Grants.

Pell Grants help more than 370,000 New York students and families afford a college education every year, and they are proven to be the most effective and equitable investment the federal government can make in students. Simply put, investing in the Pell Grant program tackles student debt head-on.

As President of the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU) representing private, not-for-profit colleges and universities that educate nearly 500,000 students annually of whom nearly 100,000 benefit from Pell Grants, as Chancellor of The State University of New York representing over 394,000 students annually and approximately 143,000 of whom receive Pell Grants, and as Chancellor of The City University of New York (CUNY), a system providing education for 275,000 students annually with approximately 123,000 Pell recipients, we know first-hand the impact Pell Grants have on our students.

The federal government has not made a meaningful increase to Pell Grants in more than a decade. Colleges have done their best to pick up the slack, but the affordability gap has become a greater barrier as Pell Grants have remained stagnant. The federal government must step up and do its part.

Doubling Pell Grants would increase the maximum award from \$6,495 to \$13,000 annually and enable thousands more students to pursue higher education. The increase would also provide students with all the economic and social benefits and help minimize their concerns with how to pay for tuition and basic living expenses.

A substantial increase to Pell Grants would have sweeping benefits for students throughout New York and across the nation. It would foster equitable and inclusive classrooms and would ensure that all students, regardless of where they choose to study, have the support they need. Investing in Pell Grants is a critical investment in the future of our students and the social and economic wellbeing of our country.

Pell Grants have enabled thousands of students to find academic success and economic opportunity at Independent Sector, SUNY and CUNY campuses across the state. Doubling the Pell Grant program should be Congress's top higher education priority and accomplished immediately and certainly by its 50th anniversary on June 23, 2022.

In partnership,

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