



October 1, 2021

Senator Chris Murphy
 136 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Richard Blumenthal
 706 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Joe Courtney
 2449 Rayburn House Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Rosa DeLauro
 2413 Rayburn House Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Jahana Hayes
 1415 Longworth HOB
 Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Jim Himes
 2137 Rayburn House Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative John Larson
 1501 Longworth HOB
 Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Members of Connecticut’s Congressional Delegation,

On behalf of the Connecticut Presidents’ Council, we write to ask you to use the budget reconciliation process to establish the pathway toward doubling the Pell Grant maximum to \$13,000. Providing a generational increase in the Pell Grant maximum in the final reconciliation bill would transform the educational trajectory of students everywhere.

The Pell Grant program is the nation’s foundational investment in higher education. **In Connecticut, Pell Grants help nearly 80,000 low- and moderate-income students attend and complete college annually.** Students attending every institution on this letter from every city in our state rely on the Pell Grant program to build their future.

Doubling the Pell Grant is the most effective, efficient, and equitable way to tackle college affordability and debt for low- and middle-income students and it can happen immediately. By expanding an existing and successful program, increased grant aid can reach students quickly and help speed up our nation’s recovery from the pandemic.

A recent [study](#) released by the Gender Equity Policy Institute found that if Congress doubles the Pell Grant award to \$13,000, borrowers with an average student debt load of \$33,342 will see their debt cut in half or more. Bachelor's students who receive the maximum award will see a 79% reduction in their debt, and community college students who receive the maximum award will graduate debt-free, according to the report.

The pandemic has disproportionately impacted low-income families and, accordingly, it has also impacted low-income students pursuing a post-secondary education. Enrollment is down in higher education and, nationwide, financial aid applications are down 6% for low-income students. Congress must take bold steps to make college more accessible for students and families with need in all sectors by Doubling Pell now.

The higher education sector in Connecticut stands ready to assist you in this collective effort to ensure this program can continue to transform the lives of the students we serve.

Sincerely,



President Rhona Free
University of Saint Joseph
Co-Chair, CT Presidents' Council



President Terrence Cheng
Connecticut State Colleges & Universities
Co-Chair, CT Presidents' Council

Presidents' Council Members:



President Marc Camille
Albertus Magnus College



President Elsa Nunez
Eastern CT State University



President Katherine Bergeron
Connecticut College



President Mark Nemec
Fairfield University



President Zulma Toro
Central CT State University



President Mark Scheinberg
Goodwin University



President Tracy Espy
Mitchell College



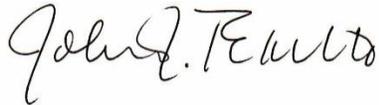
Interim President Andrew Agwunobi
University of Connecticut



President Judy Olian
Quinnipiac University



Interim Leader Mark Boxer
University of Hartford



President John J. Petillo
Sacred Heart University



President Steven Kaplan
University of New Haven



President Joe Bertolino
Southern CT State University



President Michael S. Roth
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President Joanne Berger-Sweeney
Trinity College



President John Clark
Western CT State University



President Danielle Wilken
University of Bridgeport



President Peter Salovey
Yale University