



February 6, 2009

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Oppose Cuts to Pell Grants in Stimulus Bill

Dear Senator:

On behalf of more than 80 organizations representing college students, parents, presidents, faculty and others, we ask you to oppose any amendments or alternatives that cut Pell Grant funding from H. R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Cutting the student aid proposed in H. R. 1 would be a divestment in human capital when our nation needs it the most.

Keeping the Pell Grant increase in H. R. 1 is good for the economy. It will allow displaced workers go back to college instead of heading to the unemployment lines. By pursuing retraining that will make them employable once the economy begins to recover, displaced workers stay out of a stressed job market. The Pell Grant program has seen a 15 percent increase in applications, and a large portion of those applicants are adult workers. These are people who have lost their jobs, and are going back to college to upgrade their skills for reemployment.

Keeping the Pell Grant increase helps students from families that have lost jobs, and sometimes their homes. These students are able to stay in school, preparing for the jobs of the future instead of dropping out and flooding the labor market seeking minimum-wage jobs. Keeping students in college also generates direct spending in the thousands of cities and towns where colleges and universities are located. Local pizza parlors, book stores, coffee shops, and other small businesses in these towns depend on college students and employees to survive. Other local businesses depend on the goods and services purchased by the college itself -- from food purveyors to copy shops and health services.

Keeping the Pell Grant increase is just like the GI Bill investment in 1944. Instead of GIs returning from the war, flooding the job market, and causing a return to the Great Depression, the GI bill built the foundation for the greatest knowledge economy in history. Pell funding is about jobs -- the jobs of today and jobs of the future.

As you finalize negotiations on S.1, we ask you to support the inclusion of funding for the Pell Grant as key components of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and vote against any substitute amendment that does not contain it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Molly Corbett Broad".

Molly Corbett Broad
Co-Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Warren".

David Warren
Co-Chairman