



September 9, 2021

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx:

On behalf to the nation's community college chief executive officers and trustees, we write to state our strong support for FY 2022 budget reconciliation legislation that will be marked up by the Education and Labor Committee today. The legislation would dramatically increase the ability of students to attend and succeed at community colleges, as well as the ability of these institutions to continue providing high-quality programs and needed student supports. It would lead to millions more Americans being able to generate family-sustaining wages.

Community colleges and students across the country applaud this historic investment in community colleges and higher education broadly. It is particularly timely as the nation struggles to emerge from the economic dislocation caused by the ongoing pandemic. Items that are of greatest importance to community colleges include:

- America's College Promise: This new federal-state partnership to eliminate tuition and fees for most community colleges students is a bold step that can make postsecondary education truly universal in America. We appreciate the committee's recognition of the different state structures and funding arrangements and are eager to work with colleges and states to attain widespread program participation.
- Pell Grant maximum: The \$500 increase in the Pell Grant maximum will greatly increase community college affordability. Coupled with what we hope will be at least a \$400 increase in the maximum grant through the FY 2022 appropriations process, it would represent the single largest one-year increase ever in the grant.
- Federal support for dreamers: The legislation makes DACA students eligible for Title IV. This is a longstanding priority for colleges across the country, helping hundreds of thousands of people to attain the American dream.
- Student Success Grants: This state-based grant program will lead to enhanced outcomes at community colleges. The legislation's focus on evidence-based approaches reflects growing consensus about what works best in helping students succeed. However, these interventions are costly, which makes the legislation so helpful.



- Community College Workforce Partnerships: This \$2 billion program responds to the growing awareness of the longstanding skills gap in this country, and the benefits of augmenting community colleges' workforce roles. The program largely follows previously successful federal workforce programs.
- Carl Perkins Act and Adult Education Acts: The legislation provides additional needed support to some of the most underfunded programs in the Department of Education. Funding will help individuals beginning to make their way into a career pathway. At a time when so many have lost their jobs due to the pandemic, this additional funding will help community colleges provide basic English and math literacy to individuals who need it in order to get additional training and skilling, as well as those interested in pursuing higher education.

The reconciliation provisions as brought before the Education and Labor Committee will have a tremendously positive overall effect on the students, institutions, and our economy and society. We urge passage of this legislation and look forward to working with you to secure its enactment.

Sincerely,

Walter G. Bumphus, Ph.D.
President and CEO, AACC

J. Noah Brown
President and CEO, ACCT