

Student Aid Alliance



February 28, 2011

United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

As the House of Representatives moves forward on a short-term Continuing Appropriations Act, we are pleased Congress is acting to prevent a federal government shutdown, since a shutdown would have resulted in a delay of essential aid to millions of students who need federal grants and loans to attend college. This temporary solution has come at a high price, however: the elimination of the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships (LEAP) Program, which encourages states to partner with the federal government to make grants to low-income college students.

At a time when the federal government is seeking to do more with less, eliminating the LEAP Program is particularly shortsighted. The LEAP Program's federal allocation of \$64 million generates more than \$1 billion in financial aid for over 1 million American students. This represents an average award of \$1,700, and can be the difference between earning a degree and dropping out of college for the over 80 percent of LEAP families earning less than \$40,000 a year.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in January the unemployment rate for those with a bachelor's degree or higher was 4.5 percent, compared to 12 percent for those with a high school diploma or less. Educated workers also earn substantially more: Employees with a bachelor's degree out-earn employees with only a high school diploma by \$20,748 annually.

If our economy is to recover and thrive again, we will need precisely the kind of skilled workers the LEAP Program has produced. We regret that in the understandable urgency to reach a compromise on short-term funding, the highly effective and efficient LEAP Program has been targeted. In combination with other cuts proposed to Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG) and other student aid programs, these reductions will have both immediate and long-term negative impacts on our country's economic competitiveness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Molly Corbett Broad". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Molly Corbett Broad
Co-Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Warren". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Warren
Co-Chairman

Student Aid Alliance



2011 Members

AACRAO: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
Alliance for Excellent Education
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
American Dental Education Association
American Federation of Teachers
American Student Association of Community Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Coalition of Higher Education Assistance Organization
College Parents of America
Columbia University
Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Council for Opportunity in Education
Council of Graduate Schools
Council of Independent Colleges
Educational Testing Service
EDUCAUSE
Georgetown University
Harvard University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Michigan State University
NASSGAP Federal Relations Committee
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education

National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of College Stores
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
National College Access Network
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships
National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs, Inc.
National Education Association
National Education Organization
New York Higher Education Services Corp.
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
The California State University
The College Board
The Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising
The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
The National Collegiate Athletic Association
U.S. Public Interest Research Group
United Negro College Fund
United States Student Association
University of California
University of Maryland System
University of Michigan
University of Southern California
University of Washington
Utah Valley State College
Vanderbilt University