October 30, 2013

The Honorable Paul Ryan  The Honorable Patty Murray
Committee on the Budget  Senate Budget Committee
U.S. House of Representatives  U. S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515  Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Ryan and Chairman Murray:

On behalf of the more than 60 organizations in the Student Aid Alliance, we ask you to support the federal student aid programs in the FY 2014 House and Senate budget conference. As you work with your colleagues to reconcile the differences between the two budgets, please keep in mind that today’s college students represent the future of our economy. Helping low-income students pay for college is one of the most important investments we can make in our country.

To keep Pell Grants, student loans, campus-based aid, early intervention programs, and graduate education strong, funding for non-defense discretionary appropriations should be set at the highest level possible. We support repealing the sequester, as it has disproportionately impacted non-defense discretionary programs. The sequester slashed education funding to FY 2004 levels, making college more expensive for the very students who struggle most to afford it.

More specifically, federal student aid programs have been cut by more than $23 billion since FY 2011. Pell Grant eligibility has been narrowed; the LEAP Program has been eliminated; across-the-board cuts have whittled down campus-based aid, TRIO, GEAR UP and graduate education; and student loans costs have increased. These programs cannot be cut any more. Low-income students should not bear the burden of deficit reduction.

Federal support for student aid is directly paid back to society by a more highly skilled workforce, lower unemployment, less dependence on government assistance, and increased global competitiveness.

We urge you to support the federal student aid programs in any budget agreement you may reach.

Sincerely,

Molly Corbett Broad  David Warren
Co-Chairman  Co-Chairman
2013 Members

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American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
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