



THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

July 19, 2024

The Honorable Bernie Sanders  
Chair  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor  
and Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor  
and Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Pell Grant Preservation & Expansion Act of 2024 (S.4595)

Dear Chair Sanders and Ranking Member Cassidy:

On behalf of the California Community Colleges (CCC), the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC) and the 2.8 million students we serve, we write in strong support of the Pell Grant Preservation and Expansion Act of 2024. California's higher education system is the largest and among the most diverse in the nation. Sixty-five percent of community college students, fifty percent of CSU students, and thirty-four percent of UC students come from low-income backgrounds and rely on federal financial aid to cover their total cost of attendance.

The Pell Grant makes it possible for our students to afford and obtain a postsecondary education that leads to a high-quality job. However, the purchasing power of the Pell Grant has decreased significantly over the last 50 years. At its peak, the Pell Grant covered more than three-quarters of the cost of attending college. Today, it covers less than one-third of the cost of attendance.

We strongly support the Pell Grant Preservation and Expansion Act's provisions to strengthen the purchasing power of the Pell Grant by doubling the maximum award amount and adjusting it for inflation. In addition, we applaud the Act's intent to transition the program to mandatory funding and to restore student eligibility for 18 semesters, which will ensure all students are afforded equitable and guaranteed access to a maximum Pell Grant. Lastly, we applaud the Act's provisions to provide automatic and additional aid above the maximum Pell Grant for students receiving federal public benefits, and, to broaden Pell Grant eligibility to DACA recipients. Together, these provisions will guarantee that more students across have an affordable pathway to education and can contribute to the economy.

We urge the Committee to pass the Pell Grant Preservation and Expansion Act of 2024. Thank you for considering our request and for your continued advocacy on behalf of California's

students, workforce, and economy. Should you have any questions about our request, please contact Jessie Hernandez-Reyes at [jhernandez-reyes@ccco.edu](mailto:jhernandez-reyes@ccco.edu). Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,



David O'Brien  
Vice Chancellor  
Government Relations  
California Community Colleges



Greg Schuckman  
Administrator in Charge  
Office of Federal Relations  
California State University



Chris Harrington  
Associate Vice President  
Office of Federal Relations  
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