



May 14, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Senate LHHS-ED Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Senate LHHS-ED Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
House LHHS-ED Appropriations Subcommittee  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member  
House LHHS-ED Appropriations Subcommittee  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Murray, Chairwoman DeLauro, and Ranking Member Cole:

I write to express the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities' strong opposition to the administration's revised budget request, which would rescind \$3.9 billion from the Pell Grant reserve to, in part, fund the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities. Annually, our 197 U.S. member campuses enroll 4.1 million undergraduates and 1.2 million graduate students, award 1.1 million degrees, employ 1.1 million faculty and staff, and conduct \$42.4 billion in university-based research.

A Pell Grant reserve rescission, as proposed by the administration, would be deeply misguided and contrary to the national interest. Pell Grants help ensure we have a pipeline of talented students many of whom will become the next generation of scientists and engineers who strengthen U.S. competitiveness in space and all other areas of scientific discovery and innovation.

The administration's proposal would wipe out close to half of the Pell reserve, which is needed to protect the long-term fiscal health of the program. The reserve will likely be needed to support expansions of the program, including those proposed by the administration. Fortunately, the House Appropriations Committee has already passed a strong Fiscal Year 2020 LHHS-ED measure that increases the maximum Pell Grant and does so while protecting the Pell reserve. APLU urges the Senate to follow suit.

APLU is a strong advocate for NASA funding. We have [requested increases](#) in appropriations in the Commerce, Justice, Science bill to support the critical research conducted at our universities, which furthers the NASA mission.

Choosing between providing additional funding for NASA and ensuring the long-term financial security of the Pell Grant program presents a false choice. We can and should support both. Earlier this year,

APLU and the Association of American Universities [called for](#) Congress to reach a bipartisan budget agreement that raises discretionary spending caps. Doing so would enable strong investments in student aid and research, including space exploration. Public universities continue to call for Congress and the administration to reach such a budget deal.

Please do not hesitate to let me know how APLU can be a resource as the budget and appropriations processes continue. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter McPherson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Peter" and last name "McPherson" clearly distinguishable.

Peter McPherson  
President  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities