



January 17, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Vice Chair Collins, Chair Granger, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), I urge Congress to complete the Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations process with strong funding for higher education and research.

While we understand the top line spending in the agreement for non-defense discretionary spending will pose substantial challenges in making increased investments, higher education and scientific research programs provide unique Return on Investment (ROI) to the nation and are essential to grow our economy, advance social mobility, and enhance global competitiveness at a time when competitor nations are making increased investments of their own.

Investment in student financial aid programs opens doors to postsecondary education for low-income students and furthers the development of the next-generation workforce America will require to remain a world leader. With China and India each having a population more than four times that of the U.S., and with innovation and skilled workforce being essential to economic prosperity, the U.S. needs to tap into the entirety of our population to remain a world leader. Federal Work Study (FWS) and Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants (SEOG) build upon the cornerstone of federal student aid, the Pell Grant, to keep students on track to graduation. The data overwhelmingly shows the top reason students, including academically high-achieving students, drop out of college is financial hardship. Cuts to student aid would create unneeded instability in the talent pipeline, while robust investment in these programs limits borrowing, encourages the next generation of students, and keeps low-income students on a path to degree completion.

The historic passage of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 set an important new vision for U.S. science and technology leadership and funding. Congress, however, has not provided the funding necessary to come anywhere close to the goals of the legislation. Investment in federal research programs improves health, boosts the economy, and furthers national security. Investing in the promise of the CHIPS and Science Act is essential as the federal government seeks to advance trustworthy artificial intelligence technology, lead the world in maintaining

global security and stability, maintain national security, and increase economic growth and reduce economic disparities.

APLU is concerned about the possibility Congress may eventually consider a year-long CR to fund the remainder of FY24, instead of enacting comprehensive appropriations bills with the priorities I reference. A long-term CR would lead to a substantially disruptive funding environment for federal agencies, fostering uncertainty and inefficiencies, and stunting the grant process for scientific research and programs that advance student success. Sustained growth in research funding for artificial intelligence, advanced energy, agriculture, materials science, and biomedical science is critical in ensuring the United States does not lose its status as the global leader in science and innovation.

The Fiscal Responsibility Act (H.R. 3476) requires sequestration of defense and non-defense discretionary funds from FY23 levels, including under a long-term CR. The enactment of this sequestration would represent a significant step backwards in protecting national security and furthering America's innovation economy.

I urge Congress to work together to complete the FY24 appropriations process with robust investments in higher education and research. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Becker", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Becker
President
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

CC: The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
Members of the 118th Congress