



August 17, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), I urge you to lead Congress in completing the Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations process this year with legislation that prioritizes funding for higher education and research.

We greatly appreciate that both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees have already approved all 12 annual appropriations bills. While we recognize the likely need to pass a Continuing Resolution (CR) to keep the government running until after the election, we are concerned that some in Congress already are calling for a CR that would stretch well into next year. A long-term CR that extends into the next Congress and administration would be problematic, as it would continue inadequate funding levels; ignore inflation; create deep uncertainty, both in the federal agencies and at our universities; and undercut needed funding increases for research, student aid, and other important programs. Doing so would fail to adequately address the priorities necessary to advance our national security, improve our health, grow our economy, and prevent an innovation deficit.

One example of a problem with a long-term CR can be found in the Labor-Health-Human Services and Education (LHHS-ED) bill. We greatly appreciate the funding increase of almost \$2 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the Senate bill and the increase included in the House bill. But, under a CR, appropriations for NIH would continue at the current FY2016 funding level. Further, a long-term CR would wreak havoc at the federal science agencies, creating uncertainties that leave the agencies little choice but to delay and defer funding decisions. In turn, this would cause further uncertainties and setbacks in our university laboratories, including freezing research projects and curbing hiring and graduate admissions decisions.

A long-term CR would also likely mean missing the best chance this year of bringing back the year-round Pell program. The year-round Pell program is included in the Senate's FY2017 LHHS-ED bill, and would play an important role in helping students graduate more quickly with less debt. The House bill does not reinstate year-round Pell, but appropriators in that chamber have acknowledged the

possibility that a final negotiated measure with the Senate could include the program. By finishing the appropriations process this fall, Congress would have the opportunity for such negotiations and could reinstate the year-round Pell grant program. Under a CR, the status quo would continue.

Though there are some decisions made in the FY2017 appropriations bills thus far that we oppose, such as significant cuts to the Pell appropriation in the House bill and the use of the Pell surplus for priorities outside of the Pell program in the Senate bill, we strongly believe that the FY2017 funding process should be completed this year. We urge the 114th Congress to send the President a bipartisan omnibus appropriations bill that prioritizes funding for higher education and research by the end of the year.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and we look forward to working with you as the appropriations process continues.

Sincerely,



M. Peter McPherson
President
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

cc: The Honorable John Cornyn, Senate Majority Whip
The Honorable Dick Durbin, Senate Minority Whip
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy House Majority Leader
The Honorable Steny Hoyer, House Minority Whip
The Honorable Thad Cochran, Chairman, Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Barbara Mikulski, Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Harold Rogers, Chairman, Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Nita Lowey Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Members of the House Appropriations Committee