

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 10, 2011

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human
Services, and Education
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human
Services, and Education
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby:

As you know, Pell Grants are the cornerstone of federal higher education financial aid and currently help nearly 9 million students from low- and moderate-income families pursue higher education. We write to urge you to maintain funding for the maximum Pell Grant award of \$5,550 in fiscal year 2012.

Increasing the number of workers with education beyond high school is crucial to America's future economic success. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 90 percent of the fastest growing jobs in our country demand higher education. In the next seven years, our workforce will need 22 million more workers with college degrees.

We will not meet the demand for a highly educated workforce without increasing the number of students from low- and moderate-income backgrounds who are able to afford and get access to higher education. In 2009, students from higher-income families were more than four times as likely to receive a bachelor's degree by age 24 as students from lower-income backgrounds.

To remain competitive in the global economy, America needs more students to graduate with a college degree. Pell Grants are one of our most powerful tools to increase the number of students with access to higher education.

We urge you to maintain the \$5,550 maximum Pell Grant in the fiscal year 2012 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Act.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer



Kirsten E. Gillibrand

James J. Kenney

Quillen

Patrick Leahy

Bob Carey, Jr.

Kay R. Hagan

May of Gardner

Bob Sanders

Ron Wyden

Jeffrey A. Merkley

Maria Cantwell

Al Franken

Chuck Sch

Frank R. Lautenberg

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Amy Klobuchar

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