



The Honorable Tina Smith
United States Senate
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
425 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Bob Casey
United States Senate
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

October 29, 2020

Dear Senators Smith, Klobuchar, and Casey:

We are writing to express the Today's Students Coalition's support for the Emergency Grant Aid for College Students Act (S. 4465), which would create a competitive grant program at ED to fund Emergency Financial Grant programs at institutions of higher education.

The Today's Students Coalition is a cross-cutting group of policy, advocacy and membership organizations who have joined forces to push for urgently needed policy changes that will better serve today's students.

Many students are enrolling in postsecondary education, but only 45 percent of students are completing their degree. Some students drop out of college just a few credits shy of graduation because they are a few hundred dollars short of paying for college or related expenses. Today's students are facing unexpected financial hardships, like sudden loss of wages, medical expenses, and other emergencies, which are being exacerbated by the pandemic. More than half of students will need additional funding in order to afford their tuition. Emergency grants can be a vital lifeline to students struggling to afford their food, housing, child care, or broadband needs.

The Emergency Grant Aid for College Students Act will allow institutions to directly grant students emergency aid for financial challenges posed by job loss, transportation, child care, housing, medical needs, food insecurity, or death or disability of a parent/guardian. Under this legislation, institutions will also help to connect students with public assistance programs they may be eligible for, like SNAP, TANF, WIC, and Section 8 housing. The bill will also require that annual reports include a description of any specific subgroups of eligible students who were prioritized for the emergency financial aid grants, including students of color, low-income

students, first-generation college students, students with disabilities, English learners, students experiencing homelessness, former foster youth, or student parents.

This bill, which mirrors one of our policy principles on creating robust student supports both inside and outside the classroom, will significantly empower students and ensure they are able to complete their education throughout and beyond the current pandemic and other unforeseen emergencies.

Thank you for your leadership on this important topic and we stand ready to assist you in advocating for this legislation.

Sincerely,

The Today's Students Coalition and undersigned members

Advance Vermont
America Forward
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
Association of Big Ten Students
Center for First-generation Student Success
Coalition on Adult Basic Education
Cornell Student Assembly
Excelecia in Education
Generation Hope
Higher Learning Advocates
Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)
JFF
Modern Military Association of America
NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
National Skills Coalition
National College Attainment Network (NCAN)
Student Veterans of America
Swipe Out Hunger
U.S. Public Interest Research Group (PIRG)
uAspire
UPCEA
Veterans Education Success
Young Invincibles