

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, & Related
Agencies
Washington, DC 20510
The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, & Related
Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, & Related
Agencies
Washington, DC 20510
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, & Related
Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Baldwin, Ranking Member Capito, Chairman Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The Today's Students Coalition (TSC) respectfully requests the following funding levels within the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) appropriations bill. The TSC — a collective of 37 cross-cutting higher education policy, advocacy, and membership organizations — appreciates the steps that federal policymakers have taken to support students in recent years. Yet, as higher education continues to play an integral role in building a robust workforce, federal investments must continue to enhance the capacities of postsecondary institutions while ensuring student access to the supports necessary for success in higher education.

As you begin to work on FY 2024 appropriations legislation, the TSC supports investments in the critical basic needs, child care, financial aid, and campus mental health programs outlined below.

- **Emergency Aid Grants:** Emergency financial aid grants can help students cover unexpected expenses and ensure these obstacles do not suspend or halt their education. According to the [U.S. Department of Education's \(ED\) recent performance report on the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund \(HEERF\)](#), emergency aid grants during the pandemic provided meaningful benefits, including the ability to stay enrolled, enroll in more credits, focus better on studies due to reduced stress, and earn better grades. This direct support to students around the country helped millions persist - proving that even a relatively small amount of emergency aid can ensure students have a chance to stay in school.

Post-pandemic, emergency financial situations such as an unexpected car repair, a high electricity bill, or having to miss work due to illness can force students to have to decide between staying in school or dropping out to pay for this unexpected expense. To meet this continued demand, we support the creation of a **permanent Emergency Aid Grant program** to help ensure an unanticipated financial situation does not derail a student's ability to stay enrolled in classes and complete their higher education goals.

- **Pell Grants:** Pell Grants have served as the cornerstone of federal financial aid for students from low-income backgrounds, providing crucial support for roughly 7 million students each year. We urge you and your colleagues to support a significant increase in the maximum Pell Grant award in both discretionary and mandatory funding to \$13,000 - continuing the trajectory toward doubling the maximum award amount in the coming years.
- **Child Care Access Means Parents in School:** The *Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools* (CCAMPIS) program provides vital support for the participation and success of student parents

from low-income backgrounds in postsecondary education through the provision of campus-based child care. According to [data from ED](#), parenting students who received CCAMPIS support had a post-secondary persistence rate of 78% - a full 2.5% higher than their full-time, non-parenting student peers (75.5%).

To maintain and expand on these much needed supports, we ask that Congress increase funding to \$500 million for CCAMPIS —the amount needed to provide child care support to about 6% of Pell-eligible student parents of children ages 0-5. Increasing CCAMPIS funding to \$500 million would ensure that roughly 100,000 more parenting college students receive the child care assistance they need to continue their educational journeys.

- **FIPSE Grants:** FIPSE grants, such as the *Basic Needs* grant and the *Postsecondary Student Success* program, help provide critical support to students, including those that have recently stopped out, to help them stay enrolled and complete their higher education goals. These grants provide resources to institutions of higher education to increase mental health support, support basic needs, and help connect students to public basic needs support. Continued and increased funding for these and other similar grants are integral to ensuring the success of today’s students.
- **Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Campus Suicide Prevention Grant:** In June 2020, [data from the CDC](#) showed that more than half of adults aged 18-24 had at least one adverse mental or behavioral health symptom, with more than a quarter considering suicide in the past 30 days. Those trends have worsened, with data indicating that [39% of college students had experienced a significant mental health issue](#) during their enrollment and additional [surveys showing that 83% of students](#) stating their mental health had negatively impacted their academic performance within the past month. The prevalence of students’ mental health issues is outpacing the number of students finding and receiving support.

Increasing support to the *Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant* (GLS CSPG) to \$20 million will help institutions of higher education counteract this ongoing epidemic and move it closer to parity with the current \$43.8M funding for K-12 schools. The GLS CSPG provides vital funding in colleges’ efforts to address the unique needs of students experiencing mental health challenges or contemplating suicide, consequently supporting them in reaching their academic goals.

As you consider programmatic funding levels for FY 2024 appropriations, we urge you to reaffirm Congress’s historic, bipartisan commitment to postsecondary education and today’s students. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to continued work with you to advance programmatic funding that meets the needs of our students and the nation as a whole.

Sincerely,

The Today’s Students Coalition

Higher Learning Advocates
America Forward
Advance Vermont
Center for First-generation Student Success
Generation Hope
The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice
Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)
Jobs for the Future (JFF)
LeadMN
Let’s Get Ready
The Jed Foundation
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)

National College Attainment Network (NCAN)
National Skills Coalition (NSC)
New America
Scholarship America
Student Basic Needs Coalition
Student Veterans of America (SVA)
Swipe Out Hunger
uAspire
University of California Student Association (UCSA)
University Professional and Continuing Education Association (UPCEA)
Young Invincibles