July 1, 2010

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

The higher education associations listed below urge you to support H.R. 4899, which will provide supplemental appropriations for Fiscal Year 2010. The bill’s inclusion of $4.95 billion in Pell Grant funding is of critical importance, as it will retire a significant portion of the existing $5.7 billion total shortfall. Moreover, this funding is fully offset and deficit-neutral.

Absent funding for the shortfall, the Federal Pell Grant Program faces cuts of $845 to the maximum award of $5,550, more than 15 percent of the award level that students are anticipating. This funding is critical for the nearly 9 million Americans a year who rely on Pell Grants to pursue postsecondary education.

The recession caused a surge in enrollment as students of all ages seek to improve their skills to weather the difficult economy. These students also have higher individual financial needs than originally anticipated. A cut of this magnitude would strike a crippling blow to the economic recovery now, and our economic prospects in the future.

Additionally, the bill contains a comprehensive maintenance-of-effort provision in the education jobs section that will help preserve state funding for higher education. Public institutions of higher education greatly appreciate this language. We hope the final version of the education jobs maintenance-of-effort provision will also include language for the preservation of state student aid funding for all students. In addition, this provision of $10 billion in fully offset funding to promote education job retention will help mitigate massive state budget cuts.

On behalf of the thousands of institutions and millions of students we represent, we ask that you vote ‘Yes’ on H.R. 4899 and put your support behind America’s students.

Sincerely,

Molly Corbett Broad
President

MCB/gp

On behalf of:
American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)