



May 6, 2020

The Honorable Lloyd Doggett
United States House of Representatives
2307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: Endorsement of the American Opportunity Student Tax Relief Act
of 2020**

Dear Representative Doggett:

On behalf of the American Council on Education and the undersigned higher education associations, I write to strongly endorse the American Opportunity Student Tax Relief Act of 2020, which will help students during the COVID-19 crisis and enhance access to college by making important temporary changes and permanent reforms to the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC) and Lifetime Learning Credit (LLC).

During the COVID-19 crisis, the bill would make temporary changes such as increasing the AOTC to \$3,000 and making it easier for students in lower-tuition programs to get the full \$2,000 under the LLC. It also ensures that the CARES Act emergency student financial aid grants are not taxable. For the long term, it will consolidate the AOTC and Lifetime Learning Credit into one simplified, permanent AOTC that will provide up to \$2,500 per year in tax relief for students and their families. In addition, the act maintains the expanded eligible expenses and income phase-out thresholds of the AOTC, and replaces current limits on the number of years a student can utilize the AOTC with a \$15,000 lifetime cap. Moreover, the act expands the partial refundability of the AOTC up to a maximum of \$1,500 for both the AOTC and LLC, and better coordinates the interaction of the credit with the Pell Grant, making college more affordable for low- and middle-income students.

We strongly support the goals of this bill to provide temporary pandemic relief to students and to simplify the current higher education tax credits which are overly complex and difficult for students and their families to correctly use. As a result, we believe that this legislation will enhance access by providing more effective assistance toward an associate or bachelor's degree, post-baccalaureate education, and lifelong learning.

We are grateful for your long-standing leadership and advocacy on behalf of the American Opportunity Tax Credit, starting with its creation in 2009. This legislation is an extension of that critical leadership which will undoubtedly help

millions of college students and their families. We are pleased to endorse this bill and look forward to assisting in your efforts to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ted Mitchell".

Ted Mitchell
President

On behalf of:

American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
Association of American Universities
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
College and University Professional Association for Human Resources
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Council of Graduate Schools
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
UNCF (United Negro College Fund, Inc.)