

October 4, 2017

Representative Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Room H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Room H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the undersigned associations, we write to express our strong opposition to H. Con. Res. 71, the budget resolution under consideration by the House of Representatives. The budget resolution contains a number of important provisions, foremost of which are reconciliation instructions to enable tax reform. We were pleased to see that the framework for tax reform released last week supports maintaining tax benefits for charitable giving and higher education. We have previously identified ways that tax reform can be achieved to the benefit of all of America, including our colleges and universities and we look forward to working with Congress on that process as it advances.

Beyond our great interest in the impact of tax reform on higher education, we have sizable concerns with other elements of this budget resolution. As currently drafted, it would unnecessarily cut funding to the programs that educate our workforce and drive scientific and technological innovation. In addition, it includes specific provisions that will make college more expensive and undercut Congress' recent strengthening of the Pell Grant program.

Despite cutting non-defense spending below what the law allows, the overall funding in this budget resolution shatters the caps set in law. This resolution spends tens of billions of dollars over the levels permitted by the Budget Control Act, while reducing the funding available to programs that promote American competitiveness. Such an approach is harmful to the economic health of our country in both the short- and long-terms.

The resolution also includes reconciliation instructions to require the Education and Workforce Committee to find \$20 billion in savings from the programs under their jurisdiction. Savings of that magnitude cannot conceivably be achieved without significant cuts to programs that help low- and middle-income families afford higher education. If enacted, this will have an immediate negative impact on the roughly 13 million students using federal financial aid and the approximately 40 million Americans who are currently borrowing or repaying student loans.

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This damaging change would be further exacerbated by a proposal in the resolution to roll-back changes in the Pell Grant program approved by bipartisan majorities over the last decade. This proposal would weaken the program's effectiveness, undermining what Congress achieved in FY2017 appropriations through the restoration of year-round Pell Grants.

Any one of the concerns identified above would have a negative impact on the institutions we represent and the students they serve. Combined, they would curb future economic growth, limit the ability of Americans to learn the skills necessary to succeed in the modern workforce and add new costs for tens of millions of people who borrow student loans.

We urge you to reject the approach offered in this resolution, and instead work towards a budget resolution that responsibly balances important fiscal concerns with the funding necessary to grow our economy.

Sincerely,



Ted Mitchell
President

On behalf of:

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
American Indian Higher Education Consortium
Association of American Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Council for Opportunity in Education
EDUCAUSE
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships
Thurgood Marshall College Fund
UNCF