

Support Doubling the Pell Grant in FY23

Sending Office: Honorable David N. Cicilline
Sent By: Carrick.Heilferty@mail.house.gov

[SIGN ON VIA QUILL](#)

Current Signers: Cicilline*, Waters*, Jones*, Auchincloss, Barragan, Beatty, Casten, Craig, DeFazio, DeSaulnier, Dingell, Foster, Hayes, Khanna, Matsui, McBath, McEachin, McGovern, Nadler, Pingree, Ruiz, Sablan, Sarbanes, David Scott, Sires, Strickland, Swalwell, Bennie Thompson,

Dear Colleague:

Please join us in requesting that the House Appropriations Committee provide a robust funding for the Federal Pell Grant Program in Fiscal Year 2023 so that the maximum individual award can be increased to \$12,990, which is nearly double the current maximum award. We also ask that appropriators secure the long-term affordability impact of the Pell Grant program for years to come by indexing the maximum award amount to inflation and ensuring that funding for the program is fully mandatory, rather than discretionary. These policy changes will ensure that the financial support the Pell Grant program provides to students as they pursue higher education will be insulated from market changes or budget shortfalls.

Today, the maximum Pell Grant only covers about one third of the cost of an average public four-year college. With tuition costs steadily increasing, on top of other necessary expenses, fewer students Pell recipients face greater challenges in completing their degree. Doubling the maximum Pell Grant will cover more of the overall cost of a college education, help more students complete college, and help ensure students are not limited solely by their parents' income.

If you would like to sign on to this request, please sign on via Quill [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact Carrick Heilferty (Carrick.Heilferty@mail.house.gov) with Congressman Cicilline's office, Patrick Fergusson (patrick.fergusson@mail.house.gov) with Congresswoman Waters's office, or Michael Perez (Michael.Perez@mail.house.gov) with Congressman Jones's office.

Sincerely,

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

Mondaire Jones
Member of Congress

Letter Text Below:

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As you begin work on this year's Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we ask that you support significant investment in the Federal Pell Grant Program. We ask that you provide robust funding for the Federal Pell Grant Program in Fiscal Year 2023 so that the maximum individual award can be increased to \$12,990, which is nearly double the current maximum award. We also ask that appropriators secure the long-term affordability impact of the Pell Grant program for years to come by indexing the maximum award amount to inflation and ensuring that funding for the program is fully mandatory, rather than discretionary. These policy changes will ensure that the financial support the Pell Grant program provides to students as they pursue higher education will be insulated from market changes or budget shortfalls.

Despite being the cornerstone of our nation's student financial aid system, Pell Grants today cover less than one-third of the average cost of attendance at a public four-year university, which is the lowest share of tuition in the program's history. Increased tuition costs, as well expenses like textbooks, housing, food, and transportation, have drastically diminished Pell's purchasing power.^[1] This places greater strain on the students and families that the program was designed to help. At the current level, students from families earning \$30,000 or less need to spend more than 75 percent of their total income to cover the cost of a four-year college, and 50 percent of their annual income for a two-year college.^[2] Doubling the maximum Pell Grant will significantly increase the award's purchasing power, thus ensuring it will truly benefit the students and families that need it most.

For nearly 60 years, Pell Grants have provided much needed financial assistance to low-income families, unlocking higher education opportunities for millions of students. Because these grants are awarded solely based upon a student's financial need and do not have to be repaid, they are often the only vehicle available to low- and moderate-income students to pay for a college education. Strengthening the program will not only make college more affordable, but it will also improve outcomes by providing grant recipients more opportunity to focus on school, helping them cover their basic needs, and eliminating barriers to completion. Helping low- and moderate-income students obtain a college degree will promote equity and strengthen our communities, workforces, and nation. This investment will reinforce our national commitment to promoting opportunity to obtain a college education regardless of family income.

There is widespread support for doubling the Pell Grant, with more than 1,200 education and public interest organizations expressing their support for this action last year.^[3] According to a survey of college and university presidents, 79 percent of them believe that doubling the Pell Grant would most benefit schools and students.^[4] We have an opportunity to make one of the most significant investments in higher education in decades, and we need to take advantage of that opportunity by doubling the Pell Grant.

Thank you again for your attention to this critical issue. We look forward to working with you on ways to expand access to a quality higher education.

[1] <https://www.thirdway.org/memo/why-we-should-double-the-pell-grant>

[2] <https://ticas.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Why-Its-Time-to-Double-Pell.pdf>

[3] <https://www.dropbox.com/s/4bmn3sa0fsqhr5/Double%20Pell%20Letter%20-%20March%202021.pdf?dl=0>

[4] https://www.insidehighered.com/news/survey/survey-shows-college-presidents-emerging-covid-19-more-confident-their-institutions-can?utm_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm_campaign=0682325c71-DNU_2021_COPY_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1fcbc04421-0682325c71-197512641&mc_cid=0682325c71&mc_eid=4e99ea1898