



March 18, 2021

The Honorable Tim Kaine
231 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rob Portman
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Andy Levin
312 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anthony Gonzales
2458 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Kaine and Portman and Representatives Levin and Gonzales:

I am writing to express the support of Rebuilding America's Middle Class (RAMC) for the JOBS Act of 2021. This legislation will open the doors of opportunity for many Americans who are seeking a postsecondary education for employment in a high-wage career field.

RAMC represents more than 120 community colleges and 1.5 million students nationwide. As you know, community colleges serve 45 percent of all first-time freshmen and 40 percent of our students are first-generation college students. Additionally, a significant proportion of our nation's minority undergraduates attend community colleges, including 44.6 percent of all African American undergraduates, 49.7 percent of all Hispanic undergraduates, and 48 percent of Native American undergraduates. Community colleges are open access, seek to make higher education accessible and affordable for everyone and match employers' need for a larger, more diverse workforce. We know the importance of preparing more Americans to enter the workforce with the skills necessary to compete for in-demand jobs, especially during times of economic recession or labor market contraction.

The JOBS Act of 2021 would permit students enrolled at public and nonprofit institutions of higher education (IHEs) to receive Pell grants to cover the cost of programs that are at least 150 clock hours and provide instruction over at least 8 weeks. Presently Pell grants cannot be awarded for programs of less than 600 clock hours in length. Unfortunately, that leaves many high-quality and in demand programs as ineligible for Federal grant aid, cutting off the ability for many low-income students to attend programs that can launch them on a path that will allow them to provide for their families and advance in their careers. As we work to recover from the economic disruptions caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this legislation is critical to rebuilding family finances and the middle class in our country.

Thank you for your leadership on this important legislation. RAMC stands ready to assist you in advancing it through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

Joe May
Board Chair, Rebuilding America's Middle Class (RAMC)
Chancellor, Dallas County Community College District

RAMC Board

Paul Czarapata, President, Kentucky Community and Technical College System

Glenn DuBois, Chancellor, Virginia Community College System

Morna Foy, President, Wisconsin Technical College System

Steve Head, Chancellor, Lone Star College System

Joe May, President, Dallas County Community College District

Randy Schmailzl, President, Metropolitan Community College (Nebraska)

Monty Sullivan, Louisiana Community & Technical College System