



Alamo Colleges District

Dallas College

Kentucky Community and
Technical College System

Lone Star College

Louisiana Community and
Technical College System

Metropolitan Community
College

Virginia Community
College System

Wisconsin Technical
College System

May 22, 2023

The Honorable Robert C. Scott
U.S. House Committee on Education
and the Workforce
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Scott,

Thank you for introducing the Jobs to Compete Act. I am writing to express RAMC's appreciation for your leadership on this bill. RAMC strongly supports all Americans, especially low-income and unemployed workers, having access to affordable postsecondary training and credentialing opportunities that can have a significant positive impact on their future career and earnings potential. 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. We look forward to working with you to further improve this bill to ensure short-term Pell legislation advances this Congress.

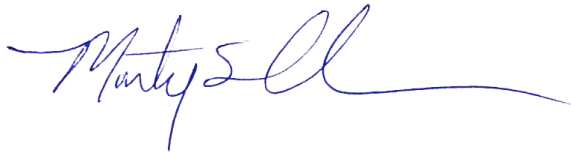
RAMC represents more than 120 community colleges and 1.5 million students nationwide. As you know, community colleges serve 45 percent of all first-time freshmen and 40 percent of our students are first-generation college students. Additionally, a significant proportion of our nation's minority undergraduates 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 JOB Acts to Compete Act would extend Pell Grants to students taking programs of at least 150 clock hours that provide instruction over at least 8 weeks. This would provide students with the opportunity to participate in high-quality, short-term programs that deliver the necessary skills to pursue high-earning career pathways. At present, Pell grants cannot be awarded for programs of less than 600 clock hours in length. This eliminates the ability to use such aid on high-quality and in-demand programs.

The expansion of eligibility for Pell Grants to short-term programs recognizes the shifting relationship between higher education and work in today's economy. For many individuals, a short-term credential is the first step towards earning a long-term certificate, an associate degree, or a bachelor's degree. This Federal support will yield substantial benefits to students and communities while ensuring that workers are not left behind. Without such additional support from Congress for short-term courses, students will be cut off from quality postsecondary opportunities that can most benefit our nation's most vulnerable students.

Thank you again for considering our views and for your leadership on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Monty Sullivan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Monty Sullivan
Board President, Rebuilding America's Middle Class (RAMC)
President, Louisiana Community and Technical College System