



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

March 20, 2024

Dear Senator:

Rebuilding America's Middle Class (RAMC) strongly supports the expansion of Pell Grant eligibility to high-quality short-term programs (often called "short-term Pell" or "Workforce Pell") at institutions of higher education. This expansion is critical to ensuring that the wide range of postsecondary education and skill building opportunities exist for all Americans, whether they are seeking a four-year degree, two-year degree or short-term certificate tied to a high-paying job.

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.

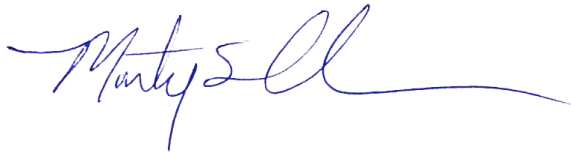
Workforce Pell addresses an urgent need in our nation's economy and most importantly, the economic well-being of our nation's workers. The short-term credentials that Workforce Pell can fund will allow for flexible "on- and off-ramps" so that students gain skills valued by employers and gain access to well-paying jobs in middle-skilled occupations. 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. Expanding Pell grants to finance such programs for low- and lower-income individuals has the potential to yield substantial benefits to students and communities and ensures Americans are not left behind. RAMC supports this expansion, as it will open the doors of opportunity for many Americans who are seeking a postsecondary education for employment in a high-wage career field.

Critically important in any Workforce Pell legislation is a direct tie between the eligible programs and well-paying jobs. RAMC has worked over the years to ensure that any Workforce Pell related legislation has this connection and related guardrails to ensure that those taking advantage of this assistance are able to further their personal economic situation and advance in a career.

RAMC has been a longtime supporter of the bipartisan Jumpstart Our Business by Supporting Students Act (or JOBS Act) introduced by Senators Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Mike Braun (R-IN). We also appreciate the leadership of Senator Tedd Budd (R-NC) for the introduction of his Workforce Pell proposal – the Pell Act and other Senators who have cosponsored and supported these and other Workforce Pell proposals. We hope this bipartisan support makes clear that final passage of this legislation is possible this Congress.

RAMC looks forward to the enactment of Workforce Pell legislation this Congress. Thank you for considering our views on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Monty Sullivan", 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