

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

July 28, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
Education & Workforce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Ranking Member
Education & Workforce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker McCarthy, Leader Jeffries, Chairwoman Foxx, and Ranking Member Scott:

We are writing to express our strong support for expanding eligibility for the Pell Grant to quality short-term programs, particularly for students accessing learning online.

Today, a significant number of learners are part of a diverse group of individuals who are left behind by traditional higher educational program design, which ties learning to time and place. These learners are often over the age of 22, work at least part-time, are likely paying for school independently, or have limited discretionary budgets. Many also may live in education deserts. These individuals are looking for a path to economic prosperity, with the flexibility to learn on their schedule. By providing this flexibility, online learning expands access to hundreds of thousands who would not have access otherwise.

We are concerned that some short-term Pell expansion proposals may exclude online programs from eligibility. Through their exclusion, many of the learners an expansion would aim to support would not be able to benefit. Learners from low-income backgrounds and veterans often juggle multiple life responsibilities and do not control their work schedules. For these individuals, online programs are their only access point to education and training.

Regardless of model, all institutions should be held to the same quality standards. To that end, we took note of the robust bipartisan conversation regarding short-term Pell during the February hearing of the House Education and the Workforce Committee. We agree with Governor Jared Polis, who testified that any legislation authorizing short-term Pell should ensure that only quality programs qualify through careful measurement of outcomes, instead of excluding online programs all together. Outcomes, not modality inputs, should be the measurement.

Ensuring all learners have access to high-quality training and upskilling is crucial to meeting both the demands of the nation's students and working adults as well as addressing workforce shortages in critical industries. Assuring the online option for short-term Pell will help to close the skills gap that exists in many of these industries, providing more individuals with the education and training they need to succeed in today's economy.

We thank you for your attention and leadership to this important issue and look forward to working with you to help millions of Americans access high-quality short-term online higher education programs by providing much-needed financial assistance through authorizing short-term Pell.

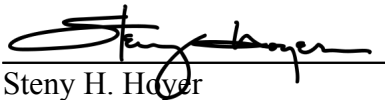
Sincerely,



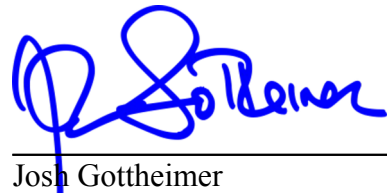
Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress



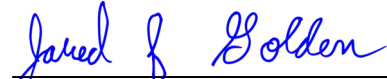
Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



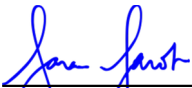
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Susan Wild
Member of Congress



Jared Golden
Member of Congress



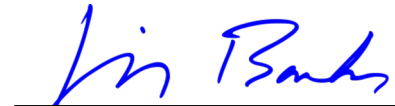
Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Blake D. Moore
Member of Congress



Glenn "GT" Thompson
Member of Congress



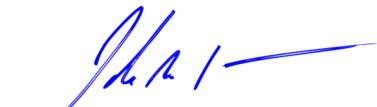
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Member of Congress