

April 8, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable John Thune  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Thune, Leader Jeffries, and Leader Schumer,

The future of our workforce and economy depends on more students successfully attaining postsecondary credentials of value and existing borrowers having vehicles to affordably repay their federal student loans. Cuts to affordable repayment pathways, retention and completion initiatives, and borrower protections will result in fewer students attaining such credentials, fewer Americans who can achieve a family-sustaining wage, and future workforce shortages.

Given the potential funding reallocations Congress could make as part of the ongoing budget reconciliation process, a broad coalition of student and borrower advocates, professional associations and unions, and civil rights organizations urge you to avoid curtailing much-needed investments in students, postsecondary institutions, and the future of our local, state, and national economies to cover the costs of tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans and other unrelated policy objectives that do not expand access to or success in higher education. Some of the proposed cuts would even add costs for taxpayers while weakening protections for past and future students. Rather than helping grow our economy, these funding cuts will diminish opportunities for students, risk the fiscal health of institutions that serve as engines of employment and innovation, and jeopardize our nation's ability to compete globally.

We collectively oppose provisions that would:

1. **Reduce access** to high-quality postsecondary programs of study, either through changes to bedrock federal financial aid programs such as the Pell Grant or further straining the resources of institutions, including proposals that would limit financial aid to the median cost of attendance; raise costs on institutions while pushing students into the private student loan market; increase the tax on targeted endowments; and eliminate tax credits and deductions that help offset the cost of college;
2. **Weaken protections** for students against high-cost, low-quality programs that engage in waste, fraud, and abuse of the financial aid programs upon which millions of students rely; defrauded borrowers; and students whose institutions close; or

3. **Stall economic opportunity and raise costs** by making student loans more expensive by removing existing Income-Driven Repayment plans, increasing borrowers' monthly payments, and removing the opportunity for loan cancellation after years of repayment, or limiting access to work-based loan relief; such changes will force millions of American families into decades of repayment and delay homeownership, wealth-building, and financial stability.

Unfortunately, the potential program cuts we have seen proposed for consideration fail to meet the challenge of our current moment. By taking away investments in our nation's students, Congress would decline to make the down payment needed to ensure our nation's future economic competitiveness.

Students and families nationwide deserve affordable access to high-quality programs that prepare students for family-sustaining careers and financial stability. We are committed to this principle, and we encourage Members of Congress to demonstrate this same commitment by rejecting damaging proposals that would reduce access to opportunity, increase risk across postsecondary sectors, and diminish students' prospects of completing the degrees and credentials they need to succeed.

Sincerely,

AFT, AFL-CIO

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

APIA Scholars

Basciano Consulting

BLU Educational Foundation

Cal State Student Association

California Competes: Higher Education for a Strong Economy

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Children Now

Chinese for Affirmative Action

Coalition on Human Needs

Consumer Action

EdTrust

Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)

Equity Research Cooperative

*Excelencia* in Education

Generation Hope

Hildreth Institute

Improve Your Tomorrow  
Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)  
Intentional Leadership  
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)  
Japanese American Citizens League  
John Burton Advocates for Youth  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
National Association for College Admission Counseling  
National Association of Social Workers\*  
National College Attainment Network  
National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients)  
National Education Association  
National Women's Law Center  
New America Higher Education Program  
NextGen CA  
Northern California College Promise Coalition  
Parent Institute for Quality Education  
Persist Nashville  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Southern California College Attainment Network  
Student Borrower Protection Center  
Student Debt Crisis Center  
Student Loan Fund (SLF)  
Student Veterans of America  
Swipe Out Hunger  
Tennessee College Access and Success Network  
The Campaign for College Opportunity  
The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs  
The Institute for College Access & Success  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
uAspire  
UnidosUS  
University of California Student Association  
Young Invincibles

\*Joined by 55 chapters of the National Association of Social Workers:

National Association of Social Workers, Alabama Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Alaska Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Arizona Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Arkansas Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Colorado Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Connecticut Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Delaware Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers DC Metro Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Florida Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Georgia Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Guam Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Hawaii Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Idaho Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Illinois Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Indiana Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Iowa Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Kansas Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Kentucky Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Louisiana Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Maine Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Massachusetts Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Michigan Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Minnesota Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Mississippi Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Missouri Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Montana Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Nebraska Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Nevada Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, New Hampshire Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, New Jersey Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, New Mexico Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, New York City Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, New York State Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, North Carolina Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, North Dakota Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Ohio Chapter

National Association of Social Workers, Oklahoma Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Oregon Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Pennsylvania Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Puerto Rico Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Rhode Island Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, South Carolina Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, South Dakota Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Tennessee Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Texas Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Utah Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Vermont Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Virginia Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Virgin Islands Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Washington Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, West Virginia Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Wisconsin Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers, Wyoming Chapter

CC: Members of Congress