

July 25, 2023

The Honorable Bernie Sanders  
Chair, Senate Committee on Health,  
Education, Labor, and Pensions  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on  
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Sanders and Cassidy,

Thank you for your leadership on workforce and education policy issues. We appreciate the work the committee has undertaken to bring forth a slate of bipartisan bills for markup this week. Collectively, the undersigned organizations support the expansion of the Pell Grant program to include eligibility for students enrolled in high quality short-term education and training programs. We support the JOBS Act (S. 161), as introduced by Senators Kaine and Braun, and thank you for including it in the upcoming markup.

Currently, eligibility for the Pell Grant program is limited to education and training programs that are at least 600 clock hours (or two-thirds of a typical academic year) and 15 weeks in length. This excludes many non-degree credentials in high-demand industries, such as health care, manufacturing and IT. It also creates a financial barrier for many students and workers who may fully incur the costs of these programs in absence of student aid. Expanding the Pell Grant program to shorter term education and training programs will boost economic competitiveness while strengthening local and state economies. It will also help create affordable and accessible pathways to postsecondary credentials for tens of thousands of students.

For these reasons, we ask that you support passage of the JOBS Act during this week's committee markup. Access to high-quality education and training opportunities benefits workers, as well as our nation's economy and ability to compete globally. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Advance CTE

Association for Career and Technical Education

Association of Community College Trustees

Jobs for the Future

Higher Learning Advocates

National Skills Coalition

Rebuilding America's Middle Class (RAMC)