July 14, 2021

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger,

On behalf of our three organizations, we write to express support for the funding levels provided for key education programs and the National Institutes of Health in the Fiscal Year 2022 Labor-Health and Human Services-Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill that will be marked up by the full Appropriations Committee tomorrow. We also wish to share our concern for the exclusion of the Hyde Amendment from the bill that was introduced by your subcommittee.

Catholic and Christian higher education have long been advocates – and providers – of high-quality postsecondary education for society’s neediest students. As you know, the pandemic has disproportionately harmed low-income college students. Colleges have experienced declining enrollments of low-income students, particularly among students of color and students at historically under-resourced institutions. We appreciate that the bill approved by the subcommittee on Monday recognizes the steep challenges these and other financially disadvantaged students face by providing funding increases to Pell Grants, Federal Work Study, Supplemental Opportunity Education Grants, TRIO, GEAR UP and CCAMPIS programs.

The legislation also enhances institutional assistance, particularly for Minority-Serving Institutions, and provides additional support for technical training through the Carl Perkins Act as well as the Strengthening Community College Training Grant program. In addition, the bill provides Dreamers and DACA recipients – many of whom are enrolled in Catholic and Christian colleges and universities — the ability to access federal financial aid. It also tightens a key accountability measure for proprietary institutions. Both provisions have long been sought by the higher education community.

In addition, we are strongly supportive of the bill’s intent to strengthen America’s biomedical research capabilities with additional funding for the National Institutes of Health. Together, these provisions will make investments that will benefit Americans now and for years to come.
Our shared area of concern centers on the omission of the decades-old Hyde Amendment. The ban on federal funding for abortion services has for 40 years assured Catholics and other people of faith that the sacredness of life will be protected at the highest levels. It has long enjoyed bipartisan support and we urge the Committee to reinstate the Amendment.

The Fiscal Year 2022 Labor-Health and Human Services-Education and Related Agencies bill under consideration by the committee will enhance the ability of all Americans, regardless of income level, to access and attain the education necessary to realize their goals – an aim we fully support. However, without attention to a key element that has for so long safeguarded the most vulnerable of populations, namely the unborn, we cannot fully support the legislation in its present form.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, CM
President
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

Shirley V. Hoogstra, J.D.
President
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Rev. Michael Garanzini, SJ
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