Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU), I urge you to prioritize doubling the Pell Grant maximum as part of your work on budget reconciliation. The Pell Grant is the most effective program for increasing access to post-secondary education and it is the most effective program for improving college completion, reducing student debt, and increasing lifetime earnings for participants.

We feel strongly about this effort because the Pell Grant is targeted to students with need, at all ages and stages of their education, at all types of institutions, allowing varied pathways to post-secondary study. And, as you know, over 7 million students (80% with family incomes below $40,000) benefit from the Pell Grant.

At our 27 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States, nearly a quarter of our students are Pell Grant recipients. Our schools provide over $2 billion annually in institutional aid and 91% of our students receive some financial assistance. These combined investments pay off: our 6-year graduation rates for Pell and non-Pell students are both well above the national average.

Another benefit of the Pell program is the availability of funds beyond tuition. These dollars help students pay for childcare, food and transportation – essential needs that we know are significant barriers to post-secondary enrollment and retention.

As educators, we urge you to join us in investing in those with motivation and a sincere desire to improve their lives. By doubling the maximum Pell Grant to $13,000, you will be helping us help those with the most financial need. We would like to thank you for your consistent support for our students and our institutions. If you have any questions, please contact Jenny Smulson, Vice President of Government Relations for AJCU, at jsmulson@ajcunet.edu.

Sincerely,

Rev. Michael J. Garanzini, S.J.
President
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities