October 20, 2021

Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the member institutions of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU), I would like to express my gratitude for your commitment to addressing the unique and pressing needs of our nation through your tireless work on the Build Back Better reconciliation bill.

Solutions that are responsive to the impact of COVID and address the long-term needs of our nation will help speed our recovery and create more equitable growth in the future. On behalf of our students and so many others seeking paths toward accessible and affordable college degree programs, we urge you to prioritize federal investments in higher education, specifically the Pell Grant. AJCU has advocated for investing in the Pell Grant program because it is targeted to individuals with significant economic need who want to pursue education and training as a means of securing a more stable economic future. Moreover, the program allows for autonomy in determining the right educational option to reach students’ career/learning goals and ensures that their chosen pathway is financially accessible.

As you finalize a framework for the Build Back Better legislation, we ask that you retain a significant investment in the Pell Grant program. With a proven track record of reducing student borrowing and increasing completion, it will continue to promote greater equity in access, specifically to groups underrepresented in higher education.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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