



475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1626 | New York, New York 10115 | www.collegeandcommunity.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 3, 2020

CONTACT
Tim Ward
304-654-6397
tward@collegeandcommunity.org

In historic vote, House passes Pell for incarcerated people

The House of Representatives passed a clean reinstatement of Pell Grants for incarcerated people as part of a minibus appropriations bill, [H.R. 7617](#), on July 31, 2020. The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration. This policy shift in the lower chamber comes after a coordinated campaign to restore Pell among formerly and currently incarcerated advocates, college-in-prison stakeholders and social justice organizations.

The following statement can be attributed to Vivian Nixon, Executive Director of College & Community Fellowship:

“This historic step to restore Pell Grants for people ensnared in the carceral system is long overdue and follows 26 years since the ban was first enacted in the now infamous 1994 Violent Crime Bill - a destructive and discriminatory law that gave rise to mass incarceration.

This victory belongs to formerly and currently incarcerated people who have marched an uphill battle when all others doubted us. We walked the hallowed halls of Congress laying bare our conviction statuses to challenge the misconceptions that led to the ban in the first place – that we were irredeemable and guaranteed to return to a ‘life of crime.’

Restoring Pell Grants for people behind bars can close the opportunity gap. It can interrupt the cycle of incarceration that disproportionately devastates marginalized communities and Black and Brown people who have been the victims of a pandemic within a pandemic. As long as there are prisons, they should operate with elements of the most basic human dignity – that includes the opportunity to better yourself through access to education. We thank the House of Representatives for recognizing this and ask that the Senate do the same.”

###

[College & Community Fellowship](#) enables women with criminal justice involvement to earn their college degrees so that they, their families and their communities can thrive. We advocate for equity and opportunity for the communities we serve.
