



July 27, 2021

The Honorable (First Name) (Last Name)
(Address)
(City, State, Zip)

Dear (Title) (Last Name),

As Congress crafts legislation investing in infrastructure and support for families, we would like to highlight two areas where federal investments are needed: namely, the Pell Grant program, and campus infrastructure.

As we noted in our [May 21](#) letter to you, “the Pell Grant program is the cornerstone of the federal student aid system, and provides essential support to roughly 50,000 low- and moderate-income students annually across our 12 universities.”

Unfortunately, federal spending on Pell has not kept up with student need. In the mid-1970s, the maximum Pell Grant award covered more than three quarters of the cost of attending a four-year public college. Today the maximum grant of \$6,495 covers less than one third of these costs.¹ We urge Congress to double the maximum award to \$13,000 and index the grant to inflation.

In addition, we ask Congress to ensure that infrastructure legislation addresses the needs of the country’s public universities and our diverse student bodies. Reductions in state funding for higher education over the past decade, including capital investment, have resulted in lengthy deferred maintenance backlogs at many public universities. The problem has worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, as construction projects have been delayed or cancelled and university budgets have suffered. The collective cost of addressing deferred maintenance across our universities is estimated at over \$4.6 billion.

Federal funding is needed to improve or replace facilities and upgrade technology, which will support not just our universities but also the communities in which we sit. We urge Congress to support the [proposal](#) from the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities for a \$48 billion program to support state investments in public university infrastructure.

Thank you for your service to the people of Illinois.

Sincerely,

University of Illinois
President Timothy L. Killeen

Chicago State University
President Zaldwaynaka Scott

Eastern Illinois University
President David M. Glassman

Governors State University
President Cheryl F. Green

Illinois State University
President Terri Goss Kinzi

Northeastern Illinois University
President Gloria J. Gibson

Northern Illinois University
President Lisa C. Freeman

Southern Illinois University
President Daniel F. Mahony

Western Illinois University
President Guiyou Huang

¹ [Double Pell - Mini Policy Paper](#)



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