



Testimony: U.S. House of Representatives, Labor, Health Human Services, Education and Related
Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee

March 23, 2023

On behalf of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU), I urge you to invest in our nation's future by increasing Fiscal Year 2024 funding for federal programs within the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that serve post-secondary students. Specifically, we ask that you set the maximum Pell Grant award at \$13,000. The Pell Grant is a targeted and effective program that helps to make all post-secondary education free or considerably more affordable for students with need. We applaud the Members of Congress who have gone on record in support of doubling Pell. We also ask that you fund the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant program at \$1.115 billion, and the Federal Work Study program at \$1.555 billion. AJCU supports extending eligibility to Dreamers and looks forward to working with Congress to enact that policy. We encourage you to invest \$1.298 billion in TRIO and related programs that level the opportunity playing field for first-generation students. We also ask that you provide \$173.6 million for international education programs that help nurture global citizens, who are keenly aware of their place and responsibility to lead in an increasingly interconnected world. Finally, to address the extraordinary mental health needs facing young people today, we urge you make investments in federal mental and behavioral health programs available to college students by providing \$12 million for SAMHSA's Campus Suicide Prevention program and funding for new proposals under FIPSE at the U.S. Department of Education to increase services to this particular population.

As you may know, our U.S. Jesuit colleges and universities are located in 17 states and the District of Columbia. Our institutions (which range in size and scope) are engines for our national and local economies by driving learning, discovery, and dialogue; supporting jobs; and providing myriad services and supports to members of our campus communities and beyond. The financial promise that Congress makes to federal higher education programs is consequential to our nation's present and future stability. These programs provide the framework for creating economic opportunities for students and for achieving a more equitable society. Learning and scholarship are fundamental to sustaining the democratic values that serve as pillars of our country's leadership in the world. Jobs and earnings are important too; thus Jesuit colleges and universities prepare students for careers in all fields: they will be the scientists, the teachers, the civil servants, and innovators of tomorrow, guided to act for the greater good and prepared for a world filled with opportunity and challenges.

I am optimistic. I believe our young people are our nation's greatest asset. Increasing funding for student financial aid and support is intrinsic to our commitment to the progress and future for our country. An education in the Jesuit tradition inspires and forms students to be people for and with others, committed to justice and serving our local, national and global communities. They are worthy of our most generous investments.

Rev. Michael J. Garanzini, S.J.

President

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities