



The Education Trust

Closing the gaps in opportunity and achievement, pre-k through college.

June 19, 2018

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Labor-H Approp. Subcom.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Labor-H Approp. Subcom.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members,

On behalf of The Education Trust, an organization dedicated to closing long-standing gaps in opportunity and achievement separating low-income students and students of color from their peers, we write to express appreciation to the Committee for rejecting the Trump administration's Department of Education budget request for the FY19 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

It is unfortunate that the House Labor-H Subcommittee's allocation for FY19 was the same as FY18, despite additional funding for non-defense discretionary bills under the two year budget agreement. Given the size and importance of the Labor-H bill, it deserves a proportional increase. We hope you will advocate for a more favorable allocation as this process continues.

Despite the level allocation, we are heartened by some of the funding choices you have made that prioritize students. There are two pieces of this bill we particularly want to highlight:

- We applaud your decision to protect the Pell Grant and ask that you continue to keep Pell dollars in the Pell program by rejecting any potential rescission to the grant's temporary reserves. As you know, the temporary reserves exist because of changing economic trends and recent cuts in eligibility. These funds are a critical a tool for protecting access to higher education for low-income students and students of color. Raiding the reserves will only hasten the time when there is a deficit in the program and students are again vulnerable to cuts.
- We are also very pleased to see the Committee maintain support for Title II, Part A. The bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) revised Title II to direct funds toward more evidence-based uses and demonstrated Congress' belief in the importance of teachers and school leaders. These funds are vital in every state, where schools and districts use these dollars to recruit, train, support, and retain teachers and school leaders.

There are two areas, though, that we believe need improvement:

- The bill does not increase the maximum award for Pell Grants, which means that students will have fewer dollars to cover ever-growing costs of college. As you know, the Pell Grant is already at its lowest purchasing power in 40 years, and without increases to the maximum award, that purchasing power will decrease even further. We encourage you to increase the maximum award to \$6,230 and to work with your authorizing colleagues to advocate for reinstating Pell's mandatory adjustment for inflation.
- We urge Congress to restore funding at its FY17 level — \$14.5M — to the School Leader Recruitment and Support Program, a small but worthwhile program that promotes evidence-based, locally driven strategies that improve access to a pipeline of effective principals and school leaders in high-need schools.

We look forward to working with you and your counterparts in the Senate as the FY19 appropriations process moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John B. King Jr.", written in a cursive style.

John B. King Jr.
President and CEO
The Education Trust