



ASSOCIATION OF VERMONT
INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

...independent thinking for a collaborative world

PO Box 254, Montpelier, Vermont 05601
802.828.8826
vermont-colleges.org
sstitely@vermont-colleges.org

March 29, 2021

Senator Patrick Leahy
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510

Senator Bernie Sanders
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510

Congressman Peter Welch
2187 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC, 20515

Dear Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of the 12 presidents of the Vermont Association of Independent Colleges member institutions, we are writing to ask you to support President Biden's proposal to double the Pell Grant. Doubling the Pell Grant is one of the most effective steps Congress could take to make college education more affordable for a larger number of working-class and first-generation Vermont students.

We also ask that you work to ensure that the change is permanent by making the increased portion of the grant an entitlement. This will help to create more access and success for the nearly 9,500 Pell Grant students who attend Vermont's postsecondary institutions each year.

Next year our nation will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Pell Grant program. It would be a wonderful tribute to our nation if in honor of this important milestone the Pell Grant were doubled by the June 23, 2022 anniversary and paid for through an entitlement involving mandatory spending. This year, the program will provide almost \$37.5 million to help students attend college in our state. The impact this program has had on the lives of individuals and their families, and the economic health and competitiveness of the State of Vermont, and indeed the nation, is without parallel.

The private higher education sector in Vermont stands ready to assist you in this collective effort to ensure this program can continue to transform the lives of the students we serve.

Respectfully,
Susan Stitely
President, Association of Vermont
Independent Colleges

AVIC Member Presidents

President Laura Walker
Bennington College

President Michelle Ollie
Center for Cartoon Studies

President Benjamin Akande
Champlain College

President Bernard Bull
Goddard College

President Peter Eden
Landmark College

President Laurie Patton
Middlebury College

President Mark Anarumo
Norwich University

President Lorraine Sterritt
St. Michael's College

President Sophie Howlett
SIT

President Matthew Derr
Sterling College

President Leslie Ward
Vermont College of Fine Arts

Interim President Beth McCormick
Vermont Law School