



Colorado College | Regis University | University of Denver

January 26, 2021

The Honorable John W. Hickenlooper
United States Senate
Russell Senate Office Building
Suite SR-B85
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hickenlooper,

We are deeply grateful for the assistance Congress has provided to America's colleges and universities and the students we serve through the CARES Act and the December COVID relief bill. While this critical aid has allowed us to continue to provide our students a safe and high quality post-secondary experience, more aid is rapidly needed.

We agree with President Biden that colleges have critical resources to implement public health protocols, execute distance learning plans, and provide emergency grants to students in need; however, we are deeply disappointed that President Biden's outline for additional higher education COVID relief funding excludes most private, nonprofit institutions. In its current state, the plan calls for \$35 billion in funding to be directed to public institutions, including community colleges as well as public and private Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other Minority Serving Institutions.

The members of Independent Higher Education of Colorado (IHEC), Colorado College, Regis University, and the University of Denver ask that you include our institutions in the federal relief plan as you did with earlier COVID relief. This deadly pandemic does not distinguish among colleges or students and we should remain unified in our national fight against this disease. Like our public partners, we have significant operational challenges such as increased expenses for online learning and COVID testing in the face of reduced enrollment and revenues. Like our public partners, we are doing everything we can to reduce costs and balance our budgets but as we enter a second year under a global pandemic, our options are becoming limited.

The University of Denver, Colorado College and Regis University have been dedicated to serving Colorado students, families and supporting a thriving economy since before statehood. Today we are doing more for Colorado's first generation, low-income, and students of color than ever before with minimal state investment. Collectively we serve almost 9,000 Colorado students and provide over \$100 million in total institutional aid to Colorado students on top of Pell Grants and other scholarships. We contribute substantially to Colorado's degree completion goals by making high quality degrees affordable to even low-income students though aid from federal, state and institution resources and our commitment to timely degree completion. For example:


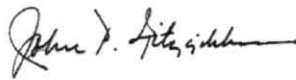
- At Regis University 51% of students are students of color and 30% are first generation students. The six-year graduation rate for Latino students at Regis is 65% (state average is 47%), for African American students that number is 75% (state average is 37%),
- The average class size at the University of Denver is 21 students with a student to faculty ratio of 11:1 but student debt on graduation remains below the Colorado average and the student loan default rate is 1.8%,

- Colorado College recently introduced the Colorado Pledge to assist Colorado families. Families making less than \$60,000 per year pay no tuition, room or board. Those making between \$60,000 and \$125,000 pay no tuition and families making between \$125,000 and \$200,000 a year will pay the same tuition as in-state students at Colorado's flagship university.

On top of helping to prepare Colorado's future workforce, our institutions are an integral part of our state and local communities. We make substantial investments and contributions to our local and state economies. Recent economic impact studies show that Colorado College, Regis University and the University of Denver collectively employ almost 8,000 full time staff and faculty and provide over \$450 million annually in direct economic benefit to Colorado. The same studies show that the direct and indirect economic benefit would total over \$1 billion annually to the state. This critical federal assistance will allow us to continue to do our part to help Colorado students and the state achieve their higher education goals.

We look forward to working with you in our common effort to combat this disease and ensure our institutions our students and the communities we serve have the resources they need to meet this challenge.

Sincerely,



John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.
President, Regis University

Jeremy Haefner
Chancellor, University of Denver



Mike Edmonds
Acting President, Colorado College

