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May 20, 2019

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U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
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Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the 110 organizations and institutions that are members of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), we write to oppose the additional deep cut to federal education funding in the President's fiscal year 2020 budget amendment submitted to Congress on May 13. The President's budget had already cut discretionary resources for the Department of Education by \$8.8 billion below the 2019 level, and the budget amendment would deepen the cut to \$10.7 billion – a cut of 15 percent. More than one third of the total cut is a rescission of \$3.9 billion that Congress has already provided for Pell Grants, the largest source of federal grant aid to help low-income students obtain a post-secondary education. CEF urges Congress to increase, not cut, federal investments in education – investments that are among the best the nation can make, leading to greater economic growth, a strong national defense, and an internationally competitive workforce.

Costs for the Pell Grant program can vary widely from year to year, and as recently as 2011 the program posted a shortfall of nearly \$2 billion. While Congress increased appropriations and dedicated offsets from mandatory spending cuts to secure the program in 2012 and 2013, it also made multiple

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changes to reduce the size of the program by limiting eligibility and student benefits – changes that resulted in tens of thousands of students losing access to Pell Grants. Over the last three years, \$1.9 billion that had been provided for Pell Grants has been rescinded. Enacting the Administration’s request for an additional rescission of \$3.9 billion would jeopardize the Pell Grant program if economic conditions change or if the benefit is increased under continued tight discretionary spending caps.

CEF, the nation’s oldest and largest education coalition, is a non-partisan organization reflecting the entire education continuum, including early childhood education through elementary and secondary education to higher education, career technical and adult education, and out-of-school education needs and enhancements. Our members are teachers and school leaders, parents and students, counselors, school board members, universities and school districts, associations and others with the common goal of ensuring that education is adequately funded.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Giesecke
President



Sheryl Cohen
Executive Director

cc:

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chairman, Senate Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chairwoman, House Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
The Honorable Tom Cole, Ranking Member, House Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee