



STATEMENT OF LAUREN ASHER
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Congress Must Act to Keep College in Reach *Grant Aid and College Tax Credit for Millions Hang in the Balance*

“We urge Congress to act swiftly to fully fund Pell Grants and extend the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC). Millions of families depend on these two programs to keep college within reach. We applaud Wednesday’s vote by the House of Representatives to prevent a sharp cut in millions of students’ Pell Grants next year. We also applaud the inclusion of the AOTC in the recent compromise tax framework, and urge Congress to include it in any final tax package.

“Failure to act on these critical issues this year would seriously undermine college affordability. Almost nine million students rely on Pell Grants to help pay for college. Unless it is funded, the current \$5.7 billion Pell shortfall will slash the maximum award by \$845 and eliminate the grant completely for hundreds of thousands of students. The AOTC is a partially refundable credit worth up to \$2,500 towards tuition, books and supplies, and it will expire at the end of this month if Congress does not extend it. More than eight million families benefited from the AOTC last year, with an average credit of more than \$1,700.

“Pell Grants and the AOTC are cornerstones of our student aid system, and a recession is the worst possible time to cut grants and raise taxes for Americans struggling to pay for college. These programs have strong support from students, colleges, and higher education advocates who have [called on Congress](#) to support Pell Grants, the AOTC and the students and families who depend on them. College affordability is a key to workforce development and economic recovery, and should be a top priority for legislators of both parties.”

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An independent, nonprofit organization, the Institute for College Access & Success works to make higher education more available and affordable for people of all backgrounds. For more about our programs and initiatives, including the Project on Student Debt, see <http://ticas.org>. Follow us on Twitter: http://twitter.com/TICAS_org