



STATEMENT OF PAULINE ABERNATHY  
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### **Statement on President's FY2018 Budget and House Education and Workforce Committee Plan**

"With today's release of President Trump's [FY2018 budget](#), both the Trump administration and House Republicans have now issued plans that would increase the cost of college for millions of Americans struggling to pay for education and training. Both plans take aim at America's neediest college students by proposing deep Pell Grant funding cuts. This is not the way to make America great.

"The Trump administration's budget raids \$3.9 billion from discretionary Pell Grant funding in fiscal year 2018. It fails to seize the opportunity to use existing program funds to restore access to grants year round and increase the maximum grant, which covers the lowest share of the cost of attending a four-year public college in over 40 years. Furthermore, *raiding these funds will increase pressure to cut Pell Grant amounts and eligibility for the over 7.5 million low- and moderate-income students who rely on Pell Grants each year.*

"The administration's budget further harms low-income, minority, and first-generation college students by *eliminating* the campus-based grant program for needy students (SEOG), significantly cutting the already underfunded federal work study program, and reducing funds for the TRIO and GEAR UP college access programs.

"Rather than pushing back and committing to making college more affordable, *House Republicans have already made clear their [plan](#) to eliminate \$65 billion in mandatory Pell Grant funding, which would have a devastating impact on students and our workforce.* Mandatory funding currently pays for \$1,060 of the current maximum Pell Grant (almost one fifth of the grant). Without the \$5.9 billion in mandatory Pell Grant funding in FY 2018, either millions of students will see their grants slashed or more than one million students will be denied grants altogether. This extreme plan, proposed by House Republicans for years, would put college further out of reach for millions of Americans, forcing students to drop out, borrow more, or forgo college altogether at a time when higher education has never been more important or less affordable.

"As college costs and student debt continue to rise, the President and Congress should be making college more affordable, not less, especially for those who have been left behind by today's economy. Slashing the federal government's most effective investment in higher education will leave millions of Americans, and our country, further behind."

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*An independent, nonprofit organization, The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS) works to make higher education more available and affordable for people of all backgrounds. Our Project on Student Debt works to increase public understanding of rising student debt and the implications for our families, economy, and society. For more information see [www.ticas.org](http://www.ticas.org) or follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).*