



STATEMENT OF LAUREN ASHER
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TICAS Statement on Bipartisan Senate Agreement to Cut \$1.2 Billion from Pell Grant Program while Restoring Year-Round Grants

“Today, Senate appropriators approved a bipartisan spending bill that takes \$1.2 billion away from the Pell Grant program to fund other programs. This decision to use Pell dollars for purposes unrelated to college affordability crosses a troubling line. While the bill also restores access to year-round Pell Grants, we agree with leading members of Congress that this \$1.2 billion raid is [‘too steep of a price to pay.’](#)”

“Congress should protect and further invest in Pell Grants, not raid funds intended to help eight million low- and moderate-income students who already have record-high student debt. A combination of prior harmful cuts and an improving economy have led to [declines in Pell program costs](#). The resulting surplus funds put Congress in a unique position to both restore year-round Pell Grants *and* increase the maximum award beyond the already scheduled inflation adjustment, all while keeping the program on solid fiscal footing. Even with the inflation adjustment, the maximum Pell Grant covers less than 30 percent of what it costs to go to a public four-year college, the smallest share in over 40 years.

“Pell Grants are the federal government’s most vital investment in higher education. As the FY17 appropriations process continues, we urge Congress to reject any raid on Pell funding and to instead protect and strengthen this critical program.”

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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 or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/TICAS_org.