



STATEMENT OF James Kvaal
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Statement on FY18 Omnibus Budget and Pell Grant Funding

We are grateful that Congress has heeded the recent call from over [60 diverse, national organizations](#) to prioritize Pell Grants in the FY18 Omnibus. The bill released tonight eliminates a previously proposed cut to Pell Grant program reserve funds, and in doing so will help keep the program on solid fiscal footing in the coming years. The bill also raises the maximum [Pell Grant](#) by \$175 from \$5,920 to \$6,095 in the 2018-19 school year. While this meaningful 3% increase will provide a one-time offset to cover what the grant's automatic annual inflation adjustment would have provided were it not ending this year, the maximum grant will continue to cover less than one-third of the cost of four-year public college and its value will continue to fall further behind college costs in future years.

Despite these important provisions in the FY18 Omnibus to support students with high financial need, we need to remain vigilant about significant, ongoing threats to college access and affordability. The vision for a reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) laid out in the House [PROSPER Act](#) gives students little comfort and much cause for concern, and the President's [proposed budget](#) would raise the cost of student loans by \$200 billion over the next decade. Students deserve policies that put them first with investments to protect and improve their ability to pursue and complete a quality credential without overly burdensome debt. As Congress continues working toward an HEA reauthorization, and we await the Senate's HEA proposal, the stakes have never been higher.

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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](#) and [Facebook](#).