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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

October 12, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
Majority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Hoyer,

Thank you for your steadfast commitment and leadership in advancing President Biden's Build Back Better agenda through the process of budget reconciliation. As members of the California delegation, we are expressing our strong support for the President's America's College Promise (ACP) proposals to remain in the reconciliation package. We strongly oppose any efforts to remove related language, make cuts to the program, or otherwise scale back any of these efforts.

The ACP plan is a historic one that would safeguard America's future by boosting the middle class. As Congress debates on the best path forward, it is imperative any budget reconciliation package include universal tuition-free community college and other vital college access and success efforts. Then presidential-candidate Joseph Biden campaigned on the promise of free community college, which would represent the largest and most significant expansion of college access since the Higher Education Act of 1965, and we ask you to fulfill that promise as reconciliation moves forward.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, community colleges were devastated by significant drops in enrollment and cuts to state funding. As community colleges struggled to stay afloat, students were afflicted with housing and hunger insecurity. Unfortunately, students of color were impacted the most. In order to reengage students who left college during the pandemic, it is essential the ACP remain in the reconciliation package to transform postsecondary education in the United States.

Postsecondary education is the key to success and community colleges have long remained the backbone of America's higher education system. Students from all backgrounds attend community colleges to advance their education and attain middle class status. One in four community college students in the country attends a community college in the state of California. Congress must capitalize on this historic opportunity to make a transformational investment to increase college affordability. The ACP also makes significant investments in underresourced institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions, and invests in efforts to improve equity and success across the higher education system.

Increasing support for community colleges will result in increased degree attainment and improved employment outcomes. Students have a strong desire to attend college, but rising tuitions prices deter potential students from enrollment. We must make good on our promise that we will do everything in our power to make college more accessible and affordable for those who need it most. Free community college will benefit students and allow businesses to grow with the help of an educated workforce.

We urge you to retain the ACP proposal in the budget reconciliation package. These programs enjoy overwhelming support from the public and should not be removed during negotiations.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



MARK TAKANO  
Member of Congress

/s/ ADAM B. SCHIFF  
Member of Congress

/s/ ERIC SWALWELL  
Member of Congress

/s/ ALAN LOWENTHAL  
Member of Congress

/s/ GRACE NAPOLITANO  
Member of Congress

/s/ BARBARA LEE  
Member of Congress

/s/ JERRY MCNERNEY  
Member of Congress

/s/ DORIS MATSUI  
Member of Congress

/s/ JIMMY GOMEZ  
Member of Congress

/s/ JIMMY PANETTA  
Member of Congress

/s/ MARK DESAULNIER  
Member of Congress

/s/JOHN B. GARAMENDI  
Member of Congress

/s/ NANETTE DIAZ BARRAGÁN  
Member of Congress

/s/JOSH HARDER  
Member of Congress

/s/ SALUD CARBAJAL  
Member of Congress

/s/ JUAN VARGAS  
Member of Congress

/s/ TED W. LIEU  
Member of Congress

/s/ J. LUIS CORREA  
Member of Congress

/s/ TONY CARDENAS  
Member of Congress

/s/ JULIA BROWNLEY  
Member of Congress

/s/ KAREN BASS  
Member of Congress

/s/ LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ  
Member of Congress

/s/ LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD  
Member of Congress