



Office of Student Government Relations

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Office of Student Government Relations Statement On Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021

Federal Statement on New Years Stimulus

January 1st, 2021: This statement is in response to the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, combining the omnibus spending bill for the 2021 fiscal year with stimulus relief for the COVID19 Pandemic in the the longest bill ever passed by Congress¹. This office noted in the Update on the Student Response to CARES Act Letter² that 13.5 million adult dependents, the majority of which are students and crucial pillars of local economies, have been left out of stimulus support. We continue to advocate for the inclusion of a student recovery benefit to include eligible dependents above 17 with economic impact payments in future legislation.

What was new: The bipartisan agreement to provide \$23 billion in education funding goes a long way to helping alleviate the strain of the pandemic on higher education. Alongside this funding, the bipartisan agreement: simplified the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) from 108 to 36 questions; repealed the ban on Pell Grants for incarcerated prisoners; made it easier for lower-income students to receive the maximum amount of federal student aid (555,000 students will qualify for Pell Grants each year and 1.7 more million students will qualify to receive the maximum Pell award each year); provided an additional \$1 billion for emergency student grants; increased the maximum size of Pell Grants by \$150 to \$6,495; and extended the amount of time undergraduate students can go to school without accruing interest on their need-based federal student loans.³

Moving forward: We look forward to working with our representatives to continue to build on these policies to create a higher education system that works in the interest of students. One such area of improvement will be providing students with adequately available data in their higher education decision making process through the College Transparency Act (CTA). Additionally, it is important that students are paid fairly for work done in internships in the capitol and elsewhere. Finally, we must uphold visa access for students, both domestic and international, who are a part of our colleges and communities. We applaud the bold provisions in this pandemic relief package, and we are especially proud that progress was made on repealing the Pell Grant Ban and providing emergency student grants, two issues for which OSGR directly lobbied.

¹[https://thehill.com/policy/finance/531164-congress-unveils-23-trillion-government-spending-and-virus-relief-packa](https://thehill.com/policy/finance/531164-congress-unveils-23-trillion-government-spending-and-virus-relief-package)
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²[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eb0c5d5eb900446d6ce6c8c/t/5f0cbeb833dcfe02ca49c93a/1594670778578/S](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eb0c5d5eb900446d6ce6c8c/t/5f0cbeb833dcfe02ca49c93a/1594670778578/SENATE-CARES-2.0-Letter.pdf)
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³[https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/12/22/congressional-agreement-covid-19-would-give-higher-ed-23-bill](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/12/22/congressional-agreement-covid-19-would-give-higher-ed-23-billion)
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The Office of Student Government Relations, an office of Cornell University's Student Assembly, advocates for student interests at the local, state and federal level. Founded in 2019, the Office serves over 16,000 students from Cornell and works closely with elected officials to support the interests of students at our nation's highest levels of governance. To stay updated on the Office's actions, visit cornellosgr.com or follow [@CornelloSGR](https://twitter.com/CornelloSGR) on Twitter.