

Student Response to CARES Act

May 11, 2020

We, the undersigned representatives, recognize the immediate relief the CARES Act provided while calling upon our elected officials to support the long term needs of students, viability of student work, and the guarantee of state support of post-secondary education.

As college campuses closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students lost more than access to libraries and lecture halls; they lost jobs, homes, and the resources to support their everyday lives. Income earned by students is [crucial](#): 43% of full-time students and 81% of part-time students report being employed. Coronavirus layoffs are [disproportionately impacting](#) Americans between 16 and 24 years old as students lose the jobs they rely on to make ends meet.

The CARES Act, while invaluable for institutions, left behind the majority of America's students by omitting dependents older than 17 years who [represent](#) the 18.4 million college enrolled students. As students transition into the summer unable to find part-time jobs or internships, they no longer have access to the CARES Act money stipulated for [expenses related](#) to the disruption of campus operations. The closure of campuses, lack of opportunities to generate income, and general economic uncertainty require action.

We strongly urge our representatives in Washington to consider:

1. **An Emergency Student Recovery Benefit:** A cash transfer directed to financially eligible college students would alleviate pressures to pay rents, loans and necessities while directly injecting money into the American economy.
2. **A Student Service Grant:** Given the need to find employment away from campus, students who find employment despite hazardous conditions should be matched with federal grants towards their future education.
3. **State Commitment of Effort Stipulations:** As the economic implications of lockdown policies fully manifest, state governments have and will continue to be strained. To foster collaboration, states should continue to be expected (with emergency exceptions) to match a percentage of prior years investment in order to receive federal funding.

Page 2

May 11, 2020

Extending support to students is a critical step in maintaining commitment to higher education and ensuring resilience as our country and economy reopen.

Sincerely,

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Timothy Hunter, Chairperson, The City University of New York (CUNY) University Student Senate

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