



December 4, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-305, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell, and
Minority Leader Schumer:

We write today to urge you to extend the current suspension of payment and zero percent interest for all federal student loan borrowers, as well as the suspension of collections on defaulted loans.

The Secretary of Education authorized these critical borrower relief measures in March, which were subsequently included in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act with an expiration of September 30, 2020. In August, the administration extended the measures through December 31, 2020. As this deadline rapidly approaches, we ask you to extend this important relief for all federal student loan borrowers until December 31, 2021, or until the federal government formally declares an end to the pandemic, whichever occurs later.

Since the implementation of this relief last March, the economic circumstances of borrowers have scarcely changed. In fact, with the recent nationwide resurgence of COVID-19, the already-high unemployment rate is likely to increase. Bringing millions of Americans back into repayment in the thick of this crisis will cause additional financial hardship and force borrowers to make difficult decisions about their limited resources. Simply stated, all federal student loan borrowers who continue to be financially impacted by the pandemic need more time to get back on their feet in the form of extended relief from required repayments coupled with zero percent interest. This is especially true for the thousands of students who have recently entered repayment after withdrawing without a degree because of the pandemic.

We are now less than a month away from this relief expiring. This is not nearly enough time for borrowers to adjust their finances accordingly, especially during a time of such

volatility, nor is it enough time to prepare the infrastructure for millions of borrowers resuming payments at once. When overall financial conditions finally do improve, it is critically important to ensure all borrowers have a smooth transition to resuming their repayments to avoid any subsequent spike in defaults. This includes a comprehensive communications plan beginning two months prior to repayments resuming, as the CARES Act required for the initial September 30, 2020, deadline.

We applauded the Secretary's decision in March and Congress' subsequent inclusion of these important borrower relief provisions in the CARES Act. We urge you to extend this relief that borrowers continue to need desperately.

Sincerely,



Ted Mitchell
President

On behalf of:

American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
Association of American Universities
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators