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Joel Packer,
Executive Director
Committee for Education Funding

March 19, 2010

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the Committee for Education Funding, a coalition of more than 80 organizations representing early childhood through post-graduate education, we urge you to vote in favor of HR 4872, The Health Care & Education Affordability Reconciliation Act that invests over \$41 billion in critical education programs.

Most importantly, the bill provides \$36 billion over ten years for Pell Grants to address a significant funding shortfall as well as increase the maximum award from \$5,550 to \$5,975 by 2017. Without this mandatory funding, either every Pell Grant recipient will see their grant cut by at least \$2,500 or other vital education programs including those at the elementary-secondary level will face devastating cuts in FY 11.

HR 4872 is the only legislative opportunity this year to respond to the Pell shortfall as well as provide important needed future investments including \$750 million for College Access Challenge Grants, \$2.55 billion for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions, and \$2 billion for community colleges for improved educational and career training programs.

Failure to pass this bill and provide this critical mandatory Pell grant funding now will not only hurt over 8 million students, but also be harmful to the economy since higher levels of educational attainment result in increased economic growth and reduced levels of unemployment.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Fansmith
President

Joel Packer
Executive Director