

Federal Summary & Call for Action

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Dear Colleagues,

Before I share information and update you on our progress, and our continued advocacy efforts, I want to thank you. Thank you for sending letters, thank you for sending social media messages, and thank you for making phone calls encouraging your Senators and Congressional Representatives to support President Biden's Stimulus Bill. The \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden on March 12 and **provides nearly \$40 billion in support to institutions of higher education**. Once again, your voice and your actions made a difference!

We are working with Senator Schumer's office to obtain data specific for the \$2.6 billion in higher ed funding New York State will receive and SUNY's share of those funds. However, based on preliminary reports, the American Rescue Plan provides \$36.08 billion directly to public and private, nonprofit colleges and universities. This is funding in addition to the funding that will be provided to state and local governments including New York. Institutions will be required to spend at least half of their allocations on emergency financial aid grants to students. The second half of the funding will be available to campuses and can be used to address revenue losses. The Rescue Plan includes language specifying that funds will be available for use through September 30, 2023.

While we are working to get definitive numbers for how the emergency funds will be distributed to public and private, nonprofit colleges and universities, I invite you to check out the American Council on Education's (ACE) preliminary estimates. The ACE developed a searchable database that is **not** based on the Department of Education allocation methodology, but their previous stimulus fund distribution estimates have been accurate. With that disclaimer, please feel free to check it out [here](#) and we will provide real numbers as we have more information.

Additionally, each relief bill that Congress has passed has included a "maintenance of effort" clause that requires states to maintain state funding for higher education in FY 2022 and FY 2023 at proportional levels relative to the overall state budget in prior years, but the Secretary of Education has the authority to waive the provision. Fighting for a robust state budget is something that we have been doing nonstop and will continue to work together for until SUNY is not only financially stable, but financially strong. **To continue this necessary pressure, I am asking that you weigh in with your state legislators today. Both houses have submitted their proposed budgets. They will begin to reconcile their differences and put forward a joint budget proposal. Once that is done, decisions will be made quickly. We must not let up now. Please click [here](#) and send a letter today.**

Finally, in addition to the provisions related most directly to public higher education, this legislation extends unemployment benefits, provides stimulus checks and direct state aid, as well as a child tax benefit and funeral relief. You will find a summary of some of those benefits below.

SUMMARY OF OTHER PROVISIONS INCLUDED IN THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

DIRECT CASH PAYMENTS TO AMERICANS:

- For those who have not yet filed their 2020 return the income threshold will be based on your 2019 return.
- Individuals with income less than \$75,000 qualify for \$1400 payment.
- Married couple with income less than \$150,000 qualify for \$1400 payment.
- Plus additional \$1400 per child.

UNEMPLOYMENT:

- If you have filed for unemployment the first \$10,200 of UI benefits will be tax exempt.

CHILD TAX BENEFIT:

- If you are currently pregnant or have children up to age 17 you will qualify for recurring payments.
- Children ages 6-17 qualifies for \$3000 in total payments.
- Children ages 0-6 qualifies for \$3600 in total payments.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE:

- Unemployment insurance will be supplemented by the Federal government by \$300 per week through September.

FUNERAL RELIEF:

- If you have lost a family member to Covid and have incurred funeral or burial costs you are eligible for funds up to \$7000 to cover those expenses.

COBRA HEALTH INSURANCE:

- Any payments for COBRA extensions are waived until September.

STATE RELIEF:

- New York State is receiving the needed \$12.5 Billion in aid to help offset the state budget for FY20/21 and FY21/22.

STUDENT DEBT:

- Although student loan debt was not canceled in this package. The final bill contained language that "if your student loan debt is canceled that does not count against your income taxes". This could be an indication of future bills and/or executive action on student debt cancellation.

What Congress and the President have achieved is historic and absolutely necessary for our nation's recovery. Let's hope that the New York State Legislature and the Governor follow suit by passing a progressive budget -- including the necessary revenue raisers!

In solidarity,
Fred

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