



February 16, 2023

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
House Education and Workforce Committee
2462 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert Scott
Ranking Member
House Education and Workforce Committee
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Foxx and Ranking Member Scott:

AccessLex Institute® is pleased to offer its support for H.R. 961, the *Pell to Grad Act*, which would extend students' lifetime Pell Grant eligibility from 12 to 16 semesters and allow those who received a Pell Grant award as an undergraduate to use their remaining Pell eligibility toward their first graduate or professional degree.

AccessLex Institute, in partnership with its nearly 200 nonprofit and state-affiliated ABA-approved member law schools, has been committed to improving access to legal education and to maximizing the affordability and value of a law degree since 1983. The AccessLex Center for Legal Education Excellence® advocates for policies that make legal education work better for students and society alike and conducts research on the most critical issues facing legal education today.

Under current law, students are prohibited from using their remaining Pell Grant funds to finance their graduate education. This runs counter to the central purpose of the Higher Education Act, which is to provide access to postsecondary education for those who may not otherwise be able to afford it. Introduced on February 9, 2023 by Representatives Haley Stevens (D-MI) and Jimmy Gomez (D-CA), the *Pell to Grad Act* could materially decrease the cost of graduate education for eligible low-income students. Allowing low-income and underrepresented students, most of whom rely on loans to finance their graduate education, to utilize their unused Pell Grant funds for graduate education could be the difference between whether students can pursue and complete their degree or not.

Given the mounting cost and demand from employers for graduate and professional degrees, it is critical that Congress take steps to advance policies that make access to advanced education a priority and lower the cost for students who are least able to afford it. The *Pell to Grad Act* presents a strong

opportunity to meaningfully and immediately enhance access and affordability of graduate and professional education for low-income and underrepresented students.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at cchapman@accesslex.org or Nancy Conneely, Managing Director of Policy, at nconneely@accesslex.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris S", written in a cursive style.

Christopher P. Chapman
President and Chief Executive Officer