



Joint Statement on America's College Promise Provisions in Build Back Better Act

October 20, 2021 – On behalf of the nation's community colleges, we are disappointed to hear reports of the exclusion of the America's College Promise Act from the Build Back Better Act that is before Congress. Community colleges provide relevant and affordable access to higher education and career training opportunities for nearly 12-million Americans each year. This legislation would mark a historical federal investment in ensuring these opportunities remain affordable and accessible.

Knowing that nearly one-third of the nation's high school graduates never attend college, America's College Promise would remove barriers to the higher education necessary in today's global economy and provide greater opportunities to earn a college degree or learn the skills needed to obtain a family-sustaining wage job. It would particularly benefit those who are low-income and traditionally underrepresented and who have been disproportionately negatively impacted by the pandemic and forced to forgo college altogether.

For more than a century, community college has been the on-ramp to the middle class for many and this investment sends a clear message that our nation values community college education as a pathway to prosperity for all Americans.

It is not too late for Congress and the President to ensure that tuition-free community college and the entirety of the America's College Promise is included in the Build Back Better Act, and forever transform and improve America's higher education system. Community college leaders urge Congress to seize this crucial moment in our nation's pandemic and economic recovery by investing in community college education to benefit students, communities, and local economies now and for generations to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walter G. Bumphus'.

Walter G. Bumphus, Ph.D.
President and CEO
American Association of Community Colleges

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jee Hang Lee'.

Jee Hang Lee
President and CEO Elect
Association of Community College Trustees