

October 24, 2025

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
Chair
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cassidy,

The three undersigned organizations are pleased to share the following comments in response to the Senate HELP Committee's request for information (RFI) about policy solutions to increase college cost and value transparency. Our comments address value transparency, the second policy goal outlined in the RFI.

Investing in a postsecondary education pays off. Earning a certificate or degree boosts graduates' earning potential and economic security, in addition to a vast array of benefits that accrue to both the student and society. But not all programs provide the same return on investment for all students. For too long, students, families, and policymakers have relied on fragmented data to assess the value of a college education. That's because existing federal postsecondary data are incomplete, making it difficult to access timely and accurate information about student access, success, costs, and outcomes.

To address these challenges and increase value transparency, we urge lawmakers to pass your College Transparency Act (CTA), a bipartisan, bicameral policy solution that addresses information gaps and strengthens our nation's data systems. CTA would create a student-level data network that connects and leverages federal and institutional data to ensure that complete information about aggregate student outcomes is available to the public and policymakers.

Unfortunately, as you noted in your RFI, not all students are counted in existing federal data collections that inform the Department of Education's College Scorecard. Notably, earnings data in the College Scorecard are limited to students who receive federal Title IV aid. This, in turn, omits one in three students who do not receive federal aid.¹ CTA has been through a careful legislative drafting process, with extensive consideration to maximizing the benefits of improved higher education data while protecting privacy and upholding security. Other policy options fail to achieve the comprehensive approach needed to accurately inform students, families and policymakers. We strongly support the bill as drafted.

We are grateful for your longstanding leadership of CTA, as well as the support of fellow lead sponsors Sen. Warren (D-MA) and Reps. Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) and Kelly (R-PA).

¹ These estimates represent the share of undergraduate students enrolled in 2019–20 who never received a federal student loan or Pell Grant. Note that this calculation estimates the share of undergraduates who never received federal student loans or Pell Grants at any point during their enrollment. This RFI cites a different figure that assesses whether first-time, full-time freshmen received federal aid in a single year.

We urge Congressional leaders to pass CTA as is, and ensure all students, families and policymakers can access critical, reliable data about college programs and student outcomes.

Sincerely,

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)
Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)
New America Higher Education Program

CC:

The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Mike Kelly, U.S. House of Representatives