



April 27, 2021

The Honorable Robert Scott
Chairman
House Education and Labor Committee
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
House Education and Labor Committee
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx:

AccessLex Institute is pleased to offer its support for H.R. 2627, 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 April 16, 2021 by Representative Brenda Lawrence (D-MI), the *Pell to Grad Act* could materially decrease the cost of graduate education for eligible low-income students.

Countless Americans continue to struggle to make ends meet in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, making paying for college and graduate school more difficult than ever. 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 would help lower costs and could be the difference between whether a student can pursue and complete their degree or not. And as more jobs in our

economy require graduate or professional degrees, Congress must enact policies that make access to advanced education a priority. This legislation does just that.

The Committee has continually demonstrated that access and affordability are critical to its work, and AccessLex believes that 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