

# THE NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren  
309 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Warren,

On behalf of The New England Council, I write with great concern, well wishes, and with gratitude for your hard work during this global public health crisis.

Colleges and universities have been leading in response to this crisis and are crucial in our greater regional response efforts. They will also be crucial in the recovery as we work to get our communities and economy back on track. Our educational institutions are our talent pipeline and will be even more critical to our rebuilding efforts. Without financial support, many institutions may not survive.

The New England Council counts among our members over 80 public and private colleges and universities in all six New England States. In recent weeks, these institutions have faced difficult decisions to suspend classes and close their campuses to students. I write to urge you to support our students and our region's higher education sector during this unprecedented time and ask that you consider some urgently needed relief as Congress negotiates a legislative response package. At this time of upheaval, every student, every campus, and every school community has been impacted, with students quickly losing access to on-campus classes and institutions rushing to protect their students' health and well-being.

Below are some specific areas where relief is needed:

**Financial support for students and institutions** - The most immediate need is financial support for our students and institutions who are facing unexpected costs. Funding is needed to ensure this transition happens smoothly with no disruption to students' learning and in a way that is safe for our communities. Schools could especially use grants for cleaning, providing additional services, and transporting students home safely. Students need relief from paying back Pell Grants or repaying student loans for disrupted terms. We ask that students and institutions not be required to return federal financial assistance as a result of the changes forced on students during this time.

**Housing and meal assistance** - With housing and food for students being the priority, funding for room and board is a great necessity on campuses. Many institutions continue to provide housing and meals to their students and communities but are presently unsure how these costs will be covered. We ask that students and institutions not be required to return financial aid for room and board as a result of these necessary changes and encourage funding for these programs to continue to protect our students' greatest needs.

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**The New England Council**

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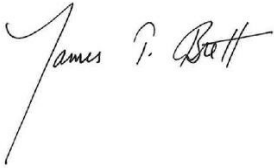
**Technology for remote learning** - As these changes have necessitated increased use of technology to support remote learning, it is crucial that students and institutions have the ability to upgrade technology and access broadband internet. Institutions need financial assistance with unanticipated expenses related to rapidly transitioning to online and distance learning to serve all students. During this difficult time where workers are at home and others are laid off, online learning is a way that colleges and universities can help prepare the workforce for when employers begin to rehire.

**Title IV relief** - We ask that reporting requirements be eased during this time to allow institutions to respond quickly to the evolving situation. We have been pleased to hear suggestions of regulatory relief from Title IV requirements during this time and encourage that those be included in relief legislation.

As you know, The New England Council represents all sectors of the region's economy, and employers in a wide array of industries. In New England, institutions of higher education are a key economic driver of the economy, employing millions, attracting national and international students to the region, and ensuring that our region's employers have access to a talented, highly skilled workforce.

We thank you for your consideration of this vital sector and student success as the nation addresses this crisis. If you or your staff have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me or Taylor Pichette, Federal Affairs Manager, at [tpichette@newenglandcouncil.com](mailto:tpichette@newenglandcouncil.com).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James T. Brett". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

James T. Brett  
President & CEO

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