

April 13, 2023

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chairwoman
Senate Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations
Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Senate Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations
Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Baldwin and Ranking Member Capito:

We, the 281 undersigned organizations and individuals, want to express our sincere appreciation for the increased investments in Asian American, Native American, and Pacific-Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) in the final FY 2023 omnibus bill. The \$18.59 million allocated to AANAPISIs in the bipartisan spending package represented a much-needed increase in funding over FY 2022 spending levels. While this increased investment marks an important step in rectifying the long standing underfunding in AANAPISIs, there is work that still needs to be done to ensure that AANAPISIs, and the students they support, are equitably funded. For instance, in 2022, 199 institutions were identified by the U.S. Department of Education as eligible AANAPISIs, but only 40 of those institutions received AANAPISI grants due to funding constraints. If Congress were to equitably fund all 199 eligible AANAPISIs at the same level as, for example, HSIs, the AANAPISI program would require an annual funding amount of \$100 million. For this reason, for FY 2024 we urge you to appropriate funding for AANAPISIs at an equitable funding level of **\$100 million under the Higher Education Act Title III and Title V, Parts A and F combined.**

The value of AANAPISIs in the higher education of Asian American and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI) students cannot be overstated. From a purely statistical standpoint, AANAPISIs enroll over 40% of all AANHPI undergraduates, though they only account for around 6% of degree granting institutions in the U.S. Furthermore, AANAPISIs confer almost 50% of associate degrees and 40% of baccalaureate degrees of all AANHPI students. In addition to high enrollment numbers, many AANAPISIs also offer holistic supports to AANHPI students who are often low-income and first generation students with myriad needs. For example, AANAPISI grant recipients provide culturally relevant support networks, promote community-based engagement, and create safe spaces for AANHPI students on campus. These targeted efforts have contributed to an increased sense of belonging for AANHPI learners at AANAPISIs, and overall higher retention and degree attainment rates relative to their non-participant peers.

Despite their marked benefits on the AANHPI student experience, AANAPISIs have been severely underfunded since their inception in 2007. The underfunding of AANAPISIs is particularly problematic when viewed in conjunction with recent demographic and social trends within the United States. AANHPI are among the fastest growing minority populations in the country and are incredibly diverse - comprising more than 48 ethnic groups and spoken languages. The population growth has also translated to enrollment, as data from the U.S. Department of Education demonstrates that AANHPI

enrollment in postsecondary institutions has grown by more than 40% since 2000. Meanwhile, as the number of AANHPI students entering postsecondary institutions has risen, AANHPI learners have also faced an increase in xenophobia and hate crimes due to COVID-19, which has been shown to negatively impact their mental health and sense of belonging. By increasing funding for AANAPISIs, more institutions will be able to provide programming to adequately address the unique academic, linguistic and mental health needs of a growing number of AANAPI students.

We hope Congress will continue to strengthen support for AANAPISIs by providing \$100 million in the FY 2024 appropriations bill. We feel that with these investments we can ensure that many more underserved AANAPI students are afforded an equitable learning experience. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please reach out to APIA Scholars at AANAPISI@PIAScholars.org.

Sincerely,

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Note: Institutional affiliations are for identification purposes only. The individuals listed on this letter are signing in their personal capacity rather than as official representatives of their affiliated organization.

* indicates an eligible AANAPISI

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