



July 8, 2015

The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott  
1201 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Scott:

On behalf of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), which represents more than 1,100 community colleges and the nearly 13 million students they educate annually, I am writing to thank you for your introduction of the “America’s College Promise Act of 2015.” AACC supports this legislation.

The legislation as introduced embodies a dramatic new concept in national education policy, ensuring that first-time students will be able to enroll in high-quality community college programs without having to pay tuition and fees. We believe that this policy will encourage more students to participate in college and succeed. It will do so both by reducing lingering financial barriers, as well as sending a clear and resounding message to the public that college attendance should be as universal as high school. Indeed, a number of states and colleges have already undertaken programs that are consistent with the general goals of this bill.

The legislation you have introduced today has numerous positive features. Its reach is vast, but its basic construction is simple and straightforward. It demands significant financial commitments from states, which must maintain spending on public postsecondary education and contribute to the tuition-free community college programs. The legislation requires both states and institutions to continue to improve their effectiveness—colleges would need to work more closely with K-12 education, and the sectors of higher education would need to function cooperatively. Ongoing innovation on college campuses would need to be advanced further.

We believe that the provisions for Minority Serving Institutions will further serve to improve access to postsecondary education, a goal we all share. These institutions are an essential part of our postsecondary system.

Community colleges and their hard-working students have proven that they merit the support embodied in your legislation. We look forward to working with you to advance it.

Sincerely,

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

Walter G. Bumphus  
President and CEO