



October 23, 2019

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee
U.S. Senator for Tennessee

The Honorable Doug Jones
Member
Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee
U.S. Senator for Alabama

Dear Chairman Alexander and Senator Jones,

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) appreciates and supports FAFSA simplification and bipartisan efforts currently underway with respect to the FAFSA Simplification Act of 2019.

MHEC, one of four regional higher education compacts in the United States, works side by side with states and institutions in the 12 state Midwest Census Region, collectively creating solutions that build higher education's capacity to better serve individuals, institutions and states. We do this by leveraging the region's resources, expertise, ideas, and experiences through convening, research, programs, and contracts.

Our state members and their respective institutions see first-hand the barriers that the FAFSA can create to enrolling and graduating the students our states need. These students in turn, power our state economies which is why it is critical to give them a fair shot, regardless of income, to obtain an affordable post-secondary credential.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the way almost 20 million Americans access federal, state, and institution based financial aid to go to college each year. The complexity of the form and the effect of verification processes is also one of the biggest barriers for many students, especially our most vulnerable, to enter a postsecondary institution. Streamlining, simplifying and clarifying the process for students and families, while balancing the need for states to operate need-based grant

programs and for institutions to have access to information they need to distribute billions of dollars in aid each year, is long overdue.

Thank you both for your strong commitment and support. We and others welcome enacting this important reform which will help many students and improve outcomes for our states.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan G. Heegaard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" and last name "Heegaard" clearly legible.

Susan G. Heegaard, President