

# U.S. Sens. Baldwin, Levin, Murray, Scott: Reintroduce Legislation to Provide Two Free Years of Community College

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin, a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, Congressman Andy Levin (D-MI), member of the House Education & Labor Committee, Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Chair of the Senate HELP Committee and Congressman Bobby Scott (D-VA), Chair of the House Education & Labor Committee, today reintroduced legislation to make the skills and credentials necessary for success in today's economy attainable for all Americans, regardless of socio-economic status. The *America's College Promise Act* will create new federal-state partnerships that provide two years of tuition-free access to community or technical college programs and significant tuition and fee grant aid for two years at an eligible four-year year historically Black college or university (HBCU) or minority-serving institution (MSI).

“Everyone should have the opportunity to gain the education and skills they need to succeed without drowning in student debt. Unfortunately, right now college costs and student loan debt are holding people back and creating a drag on economic growth for our country,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “We must take action to expand access to technical schools and community colleges so more people will have a path to a new or better job that will provide them stronger economic security.”

“The inaccessibility of education today prevents too many students in Macomb and Oakland Counties from realizing their full potential and earning a living wage,” **said**

**Rep. Levin.** “As the cost of higher education continues to soar and the student debt crisis worsens, we need policy solutions that empower working Americans. The America’s College Promise Act will make good on the American promise of a high-quality education by offering free community college to all Americans, removing financial barriers that have kept working Americans from pursuing their education and professional development.”

“As a former community college instructor in Washington State, I have personally seen the positive change that community colleges make in students’ lives. These institutions create pathways for students to pursue higher education and provide training for individuals to enter the workforce,” **said Senator Murray.** “But higher education is far too expensive and out of reach for too many students, while others are drowning in student debt—and this crisis has only been made worse by the economic recession. Ensuring free community college for every student is a bold first step that we can take right now to make college more affordable and provide students pathways to higher education and workforce training without debt. I look forward to working my colleagues Senator Baldwin and Representatives Scott and Levin to get this bill to the President’s desk.”

“Community colleges play a unique and vital role in providing students access a quality postsecondary degree. Regrettably, the chronic underfunding of community colleges is jeopardizing their ability to support their students and communities,” **said Chairman Scott.** “The America’s College Promise Act is a major investment in expanding opportunities for students and building back a better economy. This bill is one critical piece of our comprehensive plan to make quality higher education more affordable for students and families and developing a competitive 21st century workforce.”

Specifically, the America’s College Promise Act:

- Creates a new partnership between the federal government and states and Indian tribes to help them waive resident tuition and fees for two years of community and technical college programs for eligible students, while promoting key reforms to accelerate student success;
- Provides a federal match of \$3 for every \$1 invested by the state;
- Ensures that programs offer academic credits which are fully transferable to four-year institutions in their state, or occupational training that leads to recognized credentials;
- Maintains and encourages state funding for higher education; and

- Establishes a new grant program to provide pathways to success at minority-serving institutions by helping them cover a significant portion of tuition and fees for the first two years of attendance for low-income students.

The America's College Promise Act is supported by AFL-CIO, American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), American Association of University Professors, American Federation of Teachers (AFT), American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), Asian and Pacific Islander Scholarship Fund (APIASF), Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), Association of Young Americans, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), Ed Trust, Higher Learning Advocates, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), Hope Center, Jobs for the Future, National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), National Education Association (NEA), National Skills Coalition, Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF), and Young Invincibles.

The *America's College Promise Act* is cosponsored in the Senate by Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Dick Durbin (D-IL).

Text of the legislation is available [here](#).

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