



MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM  
OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

---

560 N. Park, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor – PO Box 203201 – Helena, Montana 59620-3201  
(406) 449-9124 - FAX (406) 449-9171

June 25, 2025

The Honorable Steve Daines  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tim Sheehy  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ryan Zinke  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Troy Downing  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Daines and Sheehy and Representatives Zinke and Downing,

On behalf of the Montana University System (MUS), we write to urge you to address significant impacts the reconciliation bill under consideration in the Senate would have on Montanans' access to higher education should it pass in its current form.

We share your concerns regarding the trajectory of the federal budget and America's debt. Ensuring our nation and state have a skilled and competitive workforce will be key to addressing both our fiscal deficit and our future growth and prosperity. Your university system is a national leader in providing affordable and innovative higher education. As a result, Montana students from all walks of life can access higher education that launches them into high-quality careers.

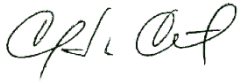
The reconciliation bill, as passed by the House, would disproportionately hurt Montana students and universities:

- **Proposed risk-sharing payments would cost the Montana University System \$7.5m annually**, with substantial payments falling on our smallest colleges and universities.
- **New Pell grant limits would cut federal need-based aid by as much as \$5.3m for Montanans, impacting more than 7,000 MUS students.** These cuts will disproportionately impact working adult students who struggle to attend college full-time. This change cuts pell aid to MUS students by as much as 11%. At some two-year institutions who specialize in serving non-traditional students, the cuts could be as high as 25%.
- **The legislation eliminates subsidized student loans, which reduce the costs of borrowing for low-income students.** These changes, paired with new caps on loan limits for graduate and professional-school programming, would put college and some in-demand graduate programs out of reach for Montana students.

As the Senate takes up this legislation, we urge you to consider the impacts it would create for students and institutions in the Montana University System. We understand there are differences in the Senate version, but for your information, include as an enclosure a fact sheet with our estimates of the House bill's impact to the MUS.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Clayton T. Christian  
Commissioner of Higher Education



Todd Buchanan  
Chair, Montana Board of Regents

/s/ Loren Bough

Loren Bough

Vice-chair, Montana Board of Regents

Enclosure

CC: Riley O'Leary; Heidi Thom