

LABOR FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Dear Vice President Kamala Harris,

As unions representing U.S. higher education workers, we look forward to working with you and our elected partners to rebuild this country's higher education system as a public good that works for students, workers, and communities.

Four million higher education workers, from college towns to eds-and-meds cities, form the backbone of communities in every state in the country. In community colleges, technical schools, state colleges, and research universities, including at HBCUs, HSIs, Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions, and MSIs, these workers maintain campuses, feed students, teach courses, undertake research, care for patients, and do so much more.

Colleges and universities should propel opportunity for the working class—for students, workers, and communities. We cannot fulfill that mission when declining public funding, ballooning student debt, and widespread job insecurity threaten learning and working conditions.

Higher education workers have been organizing for change, but obstacles remain in our long fight to protect our institutions' roles in our democracy. We call on leaders at the national level to join our struggle to reclaim public higher education for the public good by fully funding our institutions to ensure that higher education can be a place for learning, training, and discovery.

We call on your ticket and the broader Democratic Party to unite with us around key issues:

- **Full federal funding of public higher education**
 - Use federal funding to incentivize high levels of **full-time, secure, in-sourced employment** for all higher ed workers and the **prevention of layoffs or program closures**.
 - Increase **federal research funding** to support innovation across all disciplines.
 - Strengthen **federal support for Minority Serving Institutions**.
 - Demonstrate a commitment to **open enrollment institutions** that bridge the gap between under-resourced K-12 schools and a college education.
- **Expand access to higher education**
 - End student debt once and for all
 - Enact comprehensive immigration reform to remove barriers for undocumented and international students and workers.
- **Sustainable working conditions for higher education employees**
 - **Ensure equitable salaries, benefits, and job protections** for low-wage, part-time, unbenefitted, subcontracted, and temporary workers.
 - Pass the **Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act** to protect the right to organize unions in all public higher education institutions.
 - Recognize that the **free expression of ideas** is key to higher ed and **enforce federal laws** protecting the freedom to learn, speak, assemble, and research.
- Select a **Secretary of Education** who demonstrates a clear record of **supporting higher education as a truly public good**.

We call on you to ensure our nation's democratic future through renewed federal investment in our higher education institutions.

Sincerely,

Todd Wolfson, AAUP | Lee Saunders, AFSCME | Randi Weingarten, AFT | Claude Cummings & Margaret Cook, CWA
Shawn Fain, UAW | Richard Lanigan, OPEIU | Mia McIver, HELU | Becky Pringle, NEA | Carl Rosen, UE
Gwen Mills, Unite Here | April Verrett, SEIU

