

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8618

To increase the total maximum Federal Pell Grant and extend flexibility
for eligibility.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 30, 2026

Mr. MENEFEЕ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Education and Workforce

A BILL

To increase the total maximum Federal Pell Grant and
extend flexibility for eligibility.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “College Affordability
5 and Accessibility Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. INCREASE IN THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF A FED-**
7 **ERAL PELL GRANT.**

8 (a) AWARD YEAR 2026–2027 AND SUBSEQUENT
9 AWARD YEARS.—

(1) AMENDMENT TO AWARD AMOUNT.—Section 401(b)(5)(A) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a(b)(5)(A)), is amended to read as follows:

“(A)(i) AWARD YEARS 2026–2027 AND 2027–2028.—For award years 2026–2027 and 2027–2028, the total maximum Federal Pell Grant award per student shall be equal to \$14,800, reduced by the amount specified as the maximum Federal Pell Grant in the last enacted appropriation Act applicable to that award year.

“(ii) SUBSEQUENT AWARD YEARS.—For award year 2028–2029, and each subsequent award year, the total maximum Federal Pell Grant award per student shall be equal to the amount that is equal to \$14,800, increased by a percentage equal to the annual adjustment percentage for the award year for which the amount under this subparagraph is being determined, then reduced by the amount specified as the maximum Federal Pell Grant in the last enacted appropriation Act applicable to that award year.”.

1 (2) DEFINITION.—Section 401(a)(2) of the
2 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
3 1070a(a)(2)) is amended—

4 (A) in subparagraph (E), by striking
5 “and” after the semicolon;

6 (B) in subparagraph (F), by striking the
7 period and inserting “; and”; and

8 (C) by adding at the end the following:

9 “(G) the term ‘annual adjustment percent-
10 age’ as applied to an award year, is equal to the
11 estimated percentage change in the Consumer
12 Price Index (as determined by the Secretary,
13 using the definition in section 478(f)), for the
14 most recent calendar year ending prior to the
15 beginning of that award year.”.

16 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
17 subsection (a) shall take effect on July 1, 2026, and shall
18 apply with respect to each award year (as defined in sec-
19 tion 481 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
20 1088)) beginning on or after such date.

21 **SEC. 3. EXTENSION IN THE PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY FOR**
22 **GRANTS.**

23 Section 401 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20
24 U.S.C. 1070a) is amended—

1 (1) in subsection (b)(8)(A), by inserting “or as
2 a postbaccalaureate student in accordance with sub-
3 section (d)(1),” after “as an undergraduate,”;

4 (2) in subsection (d)—

5 (A) by amending paragraph (1) to read as
6 follows:

7 “(1) The period during which a student may re-
8 ceive Federal Pell Grants shall be the period re-
9 quired for the completion of the first undergraduate
10 baccalaureate course of study being pursued by that
11 student at the institution at which the student is in
12 attendance except that—

13 “(A) any period during which the student
14 is enrolled in a noncredit or remedial course of
15 study, as described in paragraph (2), shall not
16 be counted for the purpose of this paragraph;
17 and

18 “(B) the period during which a student
19 may receive Federal Pell Grants shall also in-
20 clude the period required for the completion of
21 the first postbaccalaureate course of study at
22 an eligible institution that is an institution of
23 higher education as defined in section 101, in
24 a case in which—

1 “(i) the student received a Federal
2 Pell Grant during the period required for
3 the completion of the student’s first under-
4 graduate baccalaureate course of study for
5 at least 1 but fewer than 16 semesters, or
6 the equivalent of at least 1 but fewer than
7 16 semesters, as determined under para-
8 graph (5);

9 “(ii) the student would otherwise be
10 eligible for a Federal Pell Grant, but for
11 the completion of such baccalaureate
12 course of study; and

13 “(iii) the period during which the stu-
14 dent receives Federal Pell Grants does not
15 exceed the student’s duration limits under
16 paragraph (5);” and

17 (B) in paragraph (5)(A), by striking “12”
18 each place it appears and inserting “16”.

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