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STAFF CONTACT: Parshan Khosravi

(916) 442-8280

govrelations@ucsa.org

UC Students' Statement Regarding the Student Aid Improvement Act of 2019

SACRAMENTO, CA - On behalf of over 280,000 undergraduate and graduate students at the UC system, UC Student Association (UCSA) President Varsha Sarveshwar and UC Graduate and Professional Council (UCGPC) President Connor Strobel have released the following joint statement about the Student Aid Improvement Act of 2019:

"UC students are deeply concerned about the proposed Student Aid Improvement Act of 2019 by Senator Lamar Alexander. We believe that students across the UC system and around the country deserve a comprehensive reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, and while Chairman Alexander's proposal does take steps towards simplifying financial aid, there are many critical student priorities that it fails to address.

Importantly, the bill lacks provisions pertaining to student safety and Title IX, fails to address the total cost of a college education and the over \$1.5 trillion in outstanding student loan debt, and lacks support for the student's basic needs. Today, one in every twenty-five UC students experience homelessness, more than two out of every five experience food insecurity, and nearly three times as many UC students experience anxiety than just a decade ago. Federal support to address these issues is needed.

In addition, this proposal fails to include any reallocations for vital programs such as Work Study, which have been significant in supporting historically underserved and low-income students. Furthermore, the proposal's meager \$20 increase for the Pell Grant is far short of the funding adjustment necessary to restore the grant's purchasing power for the more than 100,000 UC students who receive it.

Given these concerns, we call on Congress to reject Chairman Alexander's proposal, renew the soon-to-expire funding for Minority-Serving Institutions, and work on a comprehensive reauthorization of the Higher Education Act that includes support for the areas of student priority included above."

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