



Lion Caucus AT PENN STATE



June 20th, 2024

The Honorable Joseph Pittman
Senate Majority Leader
350 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Matt Bradford
House Majority Leader
110 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Jay Costa
Senate Democratic Leader
535 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Bryan Cutler
House Republican Leader
423 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear legislative leaders:

As a group of student leaders who represent the nearly 90,000 Penn State students, we are asking that you support equitable funding for Penn State University, our Commonwealth Campuses, and students across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Adequate funding impacts every student on all 23 campuses in unique ways. The university **must** receive this funding for a few imperative reasons. Over **42,000 Pennsylvania residents benefit from in-state tuition reduction**, and while this can mean the difference in a prospective student's college decision, the benefit that our student body sees does not stop there.

Penn State impacts 1% of Pennsylvania's total GDP, accounting for over **\$11.6 billion in growth for the Commonwealth**. Students who graduate from the University are **more likely to reside in Pennsylvania than any other state**, driving the Commonwealth's economy and powering our workforce. Penn State is directly or indirectly responsible for tens of thousands of jobs across the Commonwealth. Penn State boasts the highest graduation rate among any public university in the Commonwealth, reflecting the heightened quality of education and student support services provided. With **96% of Pennsylvanians living within a 30-mile drive from a Penn State campus**, the university's reach and accessibility are unparalleled, providing educational opportunities to an overwhelming spectrum of the Commonwealth's population. Penn State also brings roughly 26,000 students into the university from other states and nearly 10,000 additional students from outside the United States. These students, alongside those from within the Commonwealth, are likely to reside in Pennsylvania after graduation, bringing more people into the Commonwealth, and further boosting its economy. **Overall, when you give to Penn State students, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania receives so much more.**

However, when compared to other state-related institutions in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, **Penn State is disadvantaged considering the unique impact it has on the Commonwealth** and the hundreds of thousands of graduates that have helped to further contribute to the state's economy. The University of Pittsburgh (\$9,436 per-student), Temple University (\$9,233), and Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education, or PASSHE (\$8,754) each receive significantly higher levels of funding per student. **Compared nationally, Penn State ranks near last in the country for state funding on a per-student basis**, against schools that do not produce the same economic benefits that Penn State does.

With increased funding, the already widespread network of student support provided by the University would be augmented. **Penn State offers services to students both inside and outside**

the classroom, including centers for belonging, mental health resources, academic advising, extracurriculars, and so many more. Whether it be through Counseling and Psychological Services, the Paul Robeson Cultural Center, or other services such as the Financial and Life Skills Center, there are resources available to Penn State students that are unlike anything at other Pennsylvania institution. With over **1,000 registered student organizations**, **Penn State is a place with something for everyone** and encourages its students to forge their own path with an abundance of opportunities and programs available to them. With continued investment, the university can further develop these, and other unique resources to ensure that Penn State students continue to not only feel at home at each of the 23 campuses, but also in the Commonwealth as they prepare for their career and begin using their degree.

As student leaders of Penn State, we urge each of you to vote in favor of increased Penn State funding. Not only does the University and its students depend on it, but each resident of Pennsylvania will see the immediate impacts of an investment into the sole land grant university of this Commonwealth. In the words of our University President, Neeli Bendapudi, **“an investment in Penn State is an investment in Pennsylvania.”** This change isn’t just necessary and fair; it’s essential to the continued success and impact of The Pennsylvania State University on each of its students and on the Commonwealth as a whole.

Thoughtfully Submitted,

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President, Lion Caucus

Andrew Jackson

Vice President, Lion Caucus

Zion N. Sykes

President, University Park Undergraduate Association

Rasha Elwakil

Vice President, University Park Undergraduate Association

Ethan Galley

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Tyler Hoppe

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CC:

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