



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 22, 2012

Forty years ago, our Nation codified a commitment to bringing higher education within reach for every American by creating the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant—later renamed the Federal Pell Grant after Senator Claiborne Pell, to honor his efforts in creating the program. On this anniversary, we reflect on four decades of progress toward fulfilling that fundamental promise and rededicate ourselves to making college affordable for all.

Federal Pell Grants have helped millions of Americans achieve their fullest potential by not only opening the doors to college, but also providing students the financial support necessary to complete their studies and prosper in today's economy. That is why my Administration has prioritized Pell Grants as a source of funding they can count on each and every year. We have provided resources to support a 50 percent increase in Pell Grant recipients, giving college access to millions of additional students across our country; aggressively raised the maximum Pell Grant award to keep pace with rising costs; and strengthened the Pell Grant Program by cutting banks out of Federal student lending and delivering financial aid directly to students. By continuing to provide grants that extend educational opportunity to students, we make critical investments both in their personal success and in America's success in the 21st century.

As we mark the 40th Anniversary of the Federal Pell Grant Program, we also celebrate the individuals and organizations who have worked to widen the circle of opportunity for countless Americans through higher education. Today and tomorrow, let us recommit to empowering the next generation with the tools and resources they need to achieve their dreams. I am confident that, through programs like Pell Grants, our Nation will reach our goal of once again leading the world in college completion by the year 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", written in a cursive style.