



Congressional leaders clinch deal to restore Pell grants for prisoners 26 years after ban, part of major spending deal

By MICHAEL STRATFORD, POLITICO

Congressional leaders have struck a deal to reinstate Pell grants for incarcerated students more than a quarter century after banning the aid for prison education programs, top Democrats and Republicans announced in January. The legislation, which is expected to be included as part of the year-end spending deal, would lift the prohibition Congress imposed in the 1994 crime bill that then-President Bill Clinton signed and Joe Biden championed as a senator.

It is part of a sweeping package of higher education policies that the leaders of the House and Senate education committees negotiated over the last several weeks. That bipartisan agreement hitched a ride on the \$1.4 trillion omnibus spending bill, which congressional leaders are planning to pair with the nearly \$900 billion coronavirus economic relief deal. The text of the deals had not yet been released on Sunday evening, but lawmakers were expected to take action on the measures in the coming days.

Also in the higher ed deal: Lawmakers agreed to simplify the application for federal financial aid and forgive more than \$1 billion in loans for historically Black colleges and universities. The compromise will also expand the subsidy on interest for some federal student loans and reinstate Pell grants for students who are defrauded by their college. The entire package is expected to cost about \$7 billion over the next decade.

Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Va.), chair of the House education committee, said in a statement to POLITICO that the deal was a "significant step" toward making "federal grants and loans more accessible and more generous, particularly for our most vulnerable students."

Scott said that the deal included "sweeping reforms" of higher education policies sought by Democrats, who had previously opposed such piecemeal changes in hopes of securing a comprehensive overhaul of federal higher education policy. While "there is still work to be done, this proposal will help millions of students," Scott said.

Sen. Patty Murray (Wash.), the top Democrat on the Senate education committee, praised the deal for including policies that helped disadvantaged student populations. "For too long, students who are incarcerated, students who have been defrauded by for-profit colleges, and students who have drug-related offenses have been blocked from receiving federal aid," she said in a statement.

In addition to restoring Pell grant eligibility for incarcerated students, the deal would also repeal a 1998 law that restricts federal financial aid for college students who are convicted of a drug crime, according to Murray's office.

House and Senate leaders also agreed to boost the maximum Pell grant award by \$150 to \$6,495 for the 2021-2022 school year. The federal government spends roughly \$30 billion a year on the program for low-income students. The cost of providing Pell grants to incarcerated students, which is allowed through a small pilot program, costs a fraction of that amount but has long been a political lightning rod.

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2020 Survey: Over 20 Million Americans have been Wrongfully Accused of Abuse

A recent national survey conducted by YouGov reveals 8% of Americans report being falsely accused of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, or other forms of abuse. The 2,407 survey respondents were representative of the U.S. adult population. The 8% figure represents 20.4 million adults. In 62% of cases, the false accusers were reported to be females. Often, the false allegation was made in the context of a child custody dispute -- 27% of cases.

Similar percentages of falsely accused persons were seen among the various age groups, racial/ethnic categories, and geographical areas. In other demographic categories, however, substantial differences were unearthed.

The survey found a sharp gender divide – 11% of men, compared to 6% of women -- reported being falsely accused.

Declining percentages of false accusations were observed according to the level of educational attainment. Persons with no college reported higher numbers (8%) than persons with college degrees (7%) or post-graduate degrees (3%).

The exception to this declining trend was noted among persons with “some” college education, with 11% reporting that they had been falsely accused. This higher percentage may reflect the fact that many accused students are expelled, or chose to leave, before they are able to graduate.

Further analyses of the data reveal Higher numbers were seen among persons with incomes under \$40K (12%), compared to adults with incomes of \$40K-80K (7%) or over \$80K (8%).

Substantially higher percentages of false accusations were noted among persons in a civil partnership (15%), compared to persons who were single (9%), divorced (9%), or married (7%).

False allegations were fairly evenly distributed across the four abuse categories. Asked, “Has anyone you know ever been falsely accused of _____?”, respondents answered as follows:

- Domestic violence: 17%
- Child abuse: 17%
- Sexual assault: 16%
- Other form of abuse: 11%

False allegations represent a serious threat to justice. According to the National Registry of Exonerations, false allegations and perjury are the most common contributing factor to wrongful convictions, constituting 59% of such cases (1). False allegations harm the social standing, career prospects, and mental health of the accused; diminish the credibility of future victims; and undermine the integrity of our legal system. Lawmakers are beginning to enact legislation designed to deter false accusations, such as New York State’s “anti-Karen” law.

At universities in the California State system, Student Conduct Procedures delineate that, “a Complainant who knowingly and intentionally files a false Formal Complaint or any individual who is determined to have provided false statements or information during the investigation/appeal review shall be subject to discipline in accordance with the Student Conduct Code.”

This survey is believed to be the first on this topic ever undertaken. The respondents consisted of a nationally representative sample of American adults aged 18+.

Fieldwork was undertaken September 23-25, 2020. The survey was carried out online. This survey was conducted using an online interview administered to members of the YouGov panel of persons who have agreed to participate.

How Do We Navigate Mandatory Reporting Laws of Other Victims ?

By Jim Prager, CURE-SORT Board Member

There is such anger and fear mongering about us and the criminal justice system seems to want to add charges and time, that many of us end up in a conflict. Those of us who have undisclosed victims, may truly want to assist them but disclosing names creates a real danger of more charges. Therapists working with us tell us about the consequences of disclosing other victims. This is doubly the case when there are appeals in process.

When I was incarcerated, one of the men I knew had been offered immunity if he disclosed other victims. I do wonder how many prosecutors would even propose such an offer, or are they more interested in getting a conviction and moving on to the next case. I believe that whenever it is safe for us we should seek immunity from further prosecution for the right to name additional victims. This will be healthy for us as recovering people and also for others impacted by our behavior.

A Brief Note from the CURE-SORT Board

All our CURE-SORT staff are volunteers and some hold other jobs. Due to time constraints and the volume of mail and email received, we are not able to answer each letter we receive. We appreciate the information provided by incarcerated members, which keeps us informed of the happenings inside. A conglomerate of information may be used to publish in a future newsletter or on our Google Groups.

The newsletter is quarterly and limited on size based on our budget, which comes exclusively from donations. As we have no attorneys and no legal services on staff, we cannot label any mail to a facility as legal mail and request you not list letters as such. We are not a service organization, but will try to point you in the right direction of organizations who can help you with your current situation.

Thank you in advance for your understanding, your dedication, and your continued support for our cause.

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To become a CURE-SORT member or make a donation, please fill in and mail this form to:

CURE-SORT

P.O. BOX 1022

Norman, OK 73070-1022

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CURE-SORT News is a publication of CURE-SORT. SORT stands for Sex Offenders Restored through Treatment. CURE-SORT is one of eight issue chapters of a national criminal justice reform organization known as Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE), located in Washington, D.C.

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CURE-SORT Members Pass

Covid-19 has taken a toll on the many people incarcerated. We recently learned of two men housed at the Coalinga State Hospital in Coalinga, CA, the state civil commitment unit, who were on our database who had died from the pandemic.

Shannon L. Starr passed away in 2020 and James Helm died in 2021. Our thoughts go out to the families and close friends of them both.

Your contributions are vital to CURE-SORT. Please consider donating to help us continue our good work today.



CURE SORT has recently partnered with Amazon through their Amazon Smile program, which allows for a portion of all your purchases to go directly to the charity of your choice. We encourage anyone, including incarcerated people, their family and friends, to connect their amazon account to CURE SORT to help us continue to raise money to support this worthy cause.

Please take a moment to give back to a cause which is near and dear to all our hearts. We welcome any contribution, no matter how small, as our entire organization is run by volunteers on the support of your donations. Thank you in advance for your consideration, and we look forward to helping our friends, those incarcerated and those who have been released, in the unending search for justice and fairness.

Available Resources from CURE-SORT

We are pleased to offer the following resources. Donations accepted to cover cost of postage and printing. Mail donations to CURE-SORT, PO Box 1022, Norman, OK 73070-1022.

One Breath At A Time by Ila Davis (\$17.50)

Understanding Offending Behavior by Stephen Price. (A collection of 9 of Stephens articles from previous newsletters) (\$4.00 for the set of 9 articles)

When Someone on the Registry Moves into My Neighborhood (Member Price \$5; Non-Member \$10)

SUPPORT GROUP: Families & friends for those in civil confinement, contact Eldon Dillingham at 404 Walnut St., Wamego, KS 66547, eldoncdillingham@gmail.com

No More Victims – One Man’s Journey into Sexual Offending and Recovery, By S. Sands (Ed G), \$13.95 (does not include shipping).

Send all Requests to: PO Box 1022, Broadalbin, NY 12025, or gunder788@verizon.net or [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

I/We, _____, make the following donation to CURE-SORT and understand that my gift is tax exempt to the extent provided under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code.

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