April 8, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair

The Honorable Richard Burr  
Ranking Member

U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C., 20510

To Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

The undersigned organizations -- representing students, student loan borrowers, veterans, and consumers -- strongly support the confirmation of James Kvaal as Under Secretary of Education. Mr. Kvaal has an accomplished career as an advocate for students and economic opportunity, and his deep expertise and commitment make him an ideal candidate for this important role.

As president of The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS), Mr. Kvaal led one of the foremost organizations working to address college affordability and improve student financial aid through evidence-based policies and solutions. As deputy domestic policy adviser under President Barack Obama, Mr. Kvaal supported the administration’s work fostering economic opportunity, working on many of the same issues he’ll address as under secretary. From promoting affordable tuition, to combating predatory institutions and lenders, and working to increase graduation rates across the nation, the breadth and relevance of Kvaal’s experience are beyond question.

The next Under Secretary of Education will come into office at a pivotal time. Colleges and universities are under tremendous financial stress, the chaotic rollout of distance learning has been stressful for faculty and students alike, and the long-term challenges in higher education have not gone anywhere. With his careful focus on the facts, thoughtfulness in approaching difficult problems, and passionate concern for students, Mr. Kvaal is well-positioned to lead the nation’s higher education policies at this time. The nation will be lucky to have James Kvaal in this essential role. We strongly support his confirmation, and look forward to working with him to advance student success.

Sincerely,

Accountable.US
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Federation of Teachers
Campaign for College Opportunity
Campaign for Free College Tuition
Education Reform Now
Institute for Higher Education Policy
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Center for Teacher Residencies
National Education Association
New America Higher Education Program
Organizations Concerned About Rural Education
Project on Predatory Student Lending
Rebuild America's Schools Coalition
Rural School and Community Trust
Student Borrower Protection Center
Student Defense
Third Way
U.S. Public Interest Research Group (PIRG)
UnidosUS
Veterans Education Success