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Letter from Harrison Goldin to Geraldine Ferraro

Harrison Goldin

Geraldine Ferraro

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HARRISON J. GOLDIN
COMPTROLLER

Melissa

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

August 23, 1984

RECEIVED
AUG 25 1984
WASHINGTON OFFICE

Honorable Geraldine A. Ferraro
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Gerry:

I am deeply concerned over the Reagan Administration's callous neglect of higher education. The President has attempted repeatedly to dismantle Federal student financial aid programs, attacking at various times the Pell Grant, the Supplemental Economic Opportunity Grant, the College Work Study program, the National Direct Student Loan program and the Guaranteed Student Loan program.

While Congress has resisted the drastic reductions sought by the President, the aid programs have not kept pace with inflation and income eligibility requirements have tightened for some forms of aid. At the same time, the cost of tuition has risen dramatically since President Reagan took office. The Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities calculates a 52% increase in average tuition at private colleges in New York State, from \$3,809 in 1980-81 to \$5,900 in 1983-84. Public colleges have also been forced to raise their tuitions. Tuitions at the New York State and City university systems (SUNY and CUNY, respectively) have risen by \$150 each year over the past two years. The increase for the 1983-84 school year totalled nearly 14%, from \$1,075 to \$1,225. Federal financial aid levels are covering less and less of actual college costs.

That present levels of financial aid are inadequate is dramatized by the sharp increase in the number of college students transferring to the City public university system. From the fall of 1980 to the fall of 1982 the number of transfer students rose steadily, from 4,301 to 7,085, nearly 65%.

My Office surveyed 1982-83 transfer students to the City University and found that slightly more than half, including those from higher income families, had to transfer to CUNY for financial reasons; many had to transfer because of actual cuts in financial aid. But 45% of those who had to transfer for financial reasons indicated that even though their aid was not cut back they could no longer afford their previous college.

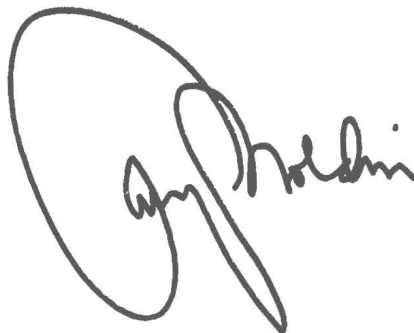
More upsetting is that many who wish to pursue a higher education cannot afford even a public institution. Many transfer students volunteered that they continue to experience financial difficulty at CUNY. The high cost of living and the reduction in work hours necessitated by scholastic obligations make it difficult, if not impossible, for many low income students (and middle income students who do not qualify for aid) to pursue a college education.

I am greatly troubled that so many of our young are being deprived of the opportunity for a full education. But it is even more aggravating that money which could be spent to remedy the situation is being added instead to an already swollen military budget. We have excessively emphasized the military to the detriment of vital social programs, including those relating to education. Even minor reductions in highly questionable weapons systems would free up enough money for effective restoration of money to domestic programs which have been cut drastically.

I strongly urge you to spearhead a return to at least pre-Reagan levels for Federal student financial aid programs, adjusted for inflation. Grant awards and income eligibility ceilings for grants and for the Guaranteed Student Loan program need to be increased to reflect the rising cost of tuition.

Higher education is an investment not only in young people themselves, but in our country's future. An educated citizenry is surely our best hope for survival.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Holden Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

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