



March 22, 2019

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Wyden,

The Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD), a non-profit consortium of 41 leading art and design colleges and universities in the US and Canada, shares your outrage at the alleged college admissions cheating and fraud recently uncovered by the FBI's Operation Varsity Blues. We additionally do not support the oft-discussed "back door" to admissions, taking very seriously an ethical approach to both admissions and advancement in our institutions.

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We strongly encourage you to reconsider your recently announced intent to introduce legislation that would "end the tax break for donations made to schools before or during the enrollment of children of the donor's family." Such a broadly stated limitation could have a dramatic chilling effect on all philanthropy to the higher education sector, impacting the students and families you aim to serve. Institutions like ours depend greatly upon such philanthropy, much of it small gifts from alumni who desire to contribute back to their alma mater, to fund scholarships and other institutional aid. It is that philanthropy which enables our institutions to provide access to low-income students as defined by Pell Grant eligibility, who at many of our institutions make up more than 40% of the total student body.

We do support all colleges and universities adopting ethical gift acceptance policies that protect a fair and equitable admissions process. Our concern is that legislation that embodies the statement you've made could limit alumni and family giving that is core to supporting the educational experience.

Please do not punish the many for the greed and illegal acts of a few. We trust that is not your intention and urge you to reconsider proposing such legislation.

Sincerely,

Deborah Obalil
President & Executive Director

Alberta College of Art and Design
Art Academy of Cincinnati
Art Center College of Design
California College of the Arts
California Institute of the Arts
Cleveland Institute of Art
College for Creative Studies
Columbus College of Art and Design
The Cooper Union
Cornish College of the Arts
Cranbrook Academy of Art
Emily Carr University of Art and Design
Kansas City Art Institute
Laguna College of Art and Design

Lesley University College of Art and Design
Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts
Maine College of Art
Maryland Institute College of Art
Massachusetts College of Art and Design
Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design
Minneapolis College of Art and Design
Montserrat College of Art
Moore College of Art and Design
New Hampshire Institute of Art
NSCAD University
OCAD University
Oregon College of Art and Craft
Otis College of Art and Design

Pacific Northwest College of Art
Parsons The New School for Design
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
Pennsylvania College of Art and Design
Pratt Institute
Rhode Island School of Design
Ringling College of Art and Design
San Francisco Art Institute
School of the Art Institute of Chicago
School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University
School of Visual Arts
The University of the Arts
Watkins College of Art