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## **Governor Wolf Launches Tour to Make College More Affordable**

**Lock Haven, PA** – Governor Tom Wolf visited Lock Haven University today to launch a tour of the 14 state-owned universities and discuss his proposal to help thousands of low- and middle-class students afford their dream of a college education.

The governor is proposing the Nellie Bly Scholarship Program, a historic \$204 million need-based scholarship that will close the gap after a student's Pell Grant and other state grants to enroll in a Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) university.

"The Nellie Bly Scholarship Program fills the gap after other aid programs so thousands of students can afford a college degree without crushing debt," said Governor Wolf. "This scholarship would help students get a college degree and spend less time paying off student loans and more time building a career in Pennsylvania."

The Nellie Bly Scholarship is a last-dollar-in program. To be eligible, students must enroll full-time in a PASSHE undergraduate program and qualify for a federal subsidized student loan. Students must commit to live in Pennsylvania after graduation for the same number of years they received the scholarship. If a student leaves the state early, they must repay the money. The program will be funded by repurposing revenues from the Horse Racing Development Fund annually.

"This is an investment in the future of our students and incentivizes them to stay in Pennsylvania after graduation," said Governor Wolf. "With less college debt, graduates can buy a car and a home, start a family and save for retirement. The program also strengthens our public university system and creates a talented labor force that Pennsylvania needs to thrive."

"The strength of Pennsylvania's economy and the vibrancy of its communities depend so much on students who graduate with career-oriented, affordable degrees," said PASSHE Chancellor Daniel Greenstein. "This program represents Gov. Tom Wolf's commitment to our students and to maintaining public higher education as the engine of social mobility and economic development that it's meant to be."

"Access to a degree leads to life changing opportunities for our students that positions them for work in an ever-evolving economy, moves them into the middle class and beyond and builds stronger communities. But for too many of them the cost is beyond their reach," said Lock Haven University President Robert M. Pignatello. "Governor Wolf's Nellie Bly Scholarship

Program recognizes this and makes a valuable investment in them and the future economic vitality of the commonwealth.”

The scholarship is named in honor of Nellie Bly, an Armstrong County native born in 1864. Bly attended the Indiana Normal School, now Indiana University of Pennsylvania, but left due to the cost. Bly became a pioneering journalist who helped to force reforms to the mental health care system in the early 20th century.

Nearly a century later, higher education remains too expensive for many low-income and middle-class families. The student loan debt for Pennsylvania residents is \$68 billion, among the highest in the nation, averaging over \$37,000 per student.

In addition to the \$204 million for the Nellie Bly Scholarship Program, the governor’s budget invests in higher education with \$12.9 million to support PASSHE’s system redesign and a \$60 million increase for the Pennsylvania State Grant Program, which serves more than 130,000 students and will increase the maximum award to \$4,700.

The Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education is the largest provider of higher education in the commonwealth with 95,000 students. In addition to Lock Haven University, the system includes Bloomsburg, California, Cheyney, Clarion, East Stroudsburg, Edinboro, Indiana, Kutztown, Mansfield, Millersville, Shippensburg, Slippery Rock, and West Chester.

**Note:** Photos and video from this event will be available at [www.pacast.com](http://www.pacast.com).

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