

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 7, 2011

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Senate Appropriations Committee
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Senate Appropriations Committee
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby:

We, the undersigned Members, write to you on behalf of the more than 840,000 low-income, first-generation college students who depend on the academic support services provided by the Federal TRIO Programs. As you know, TRIO provides intensive academic tutoring, college and career counseling, financial aid advising, and personal mentoring that enables low-income students, students with disabilities, adult learners, and veterans to achieve their goal of becoming the first in their families to earn college degrees.

What you may not know is that several thousand TRIO students will no longer benefit from these programs without sufficient funding in FY 2012. More specifically, if funding were flat-lined for TRIO in FY 2012, we know with certainty that **62,000 middle and high school students across the nation will lose access to TRIO services next year**. This figure would rise to 96,000 students if Congress funds TRIO at the FY 2008 level. Such losses would be devastating not only to the students themselves, but to their families, their schools, and their local communities.

TRIO touches every corner of the United States and serves every type of community – from urban to rural, from Native American reservations to federal territories. Additionally, TRIO students themselves represent a cross-section of needs as they range from sixth-graders to doctoral candidates. Studies conducted by the Department of Education demonstrate that TRIO students are more likely than their socioeconomic peers to go to college and perform better once there. It is critical that we continue to build on our investment in these students; to do otherwise would halt such progress and put our national security at risk.

In the upcoming fiscal year, TRIO will face tremendous challenges and may be forced to serve several thousand fewer students if Congress does not appropriate sufficient funding for the programs. Therefore, we request that the Senate affirm President Obama's request to fund TRIO at \$920.1 million in FY 2012. This modest net increase of \$10 million would allow students currently enrolled in the programs to continue to receive supportive services in the coming year.

In this time of economic distress, we must take care to make careful choices about the best use of our limited resources. We must make investments that protect our national interests, both in the immediate and long-term; that prepare our citizenry for the jobs of tomorrow; and that preserve equal opportunity within our society. We can achieve all of these goals by

appropriating \$920.1 million for TRIO in FY 2012. Therefore, we strongly encourage the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education to make this investment in TRIO in FY 2012 and help ensure educational opportunity for all.

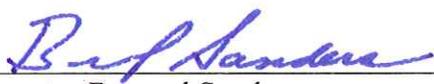
Sincerely,



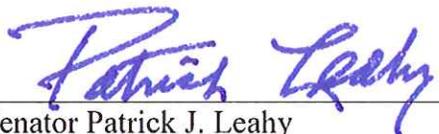
Senator Max Baucus



Senator Susan M. Collins



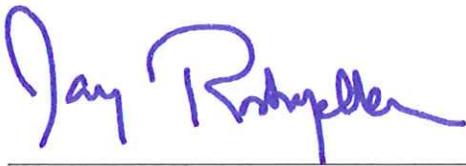
Senator Bernard Sanders



Senator Patrick J. Leahy



Senator Ron Wyden



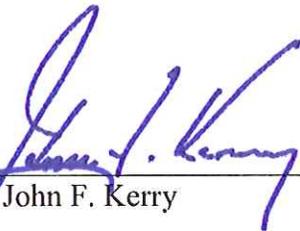
Senator John D. Rockefeller IV



Senator Al Franken



Senator Debbie Stabenow



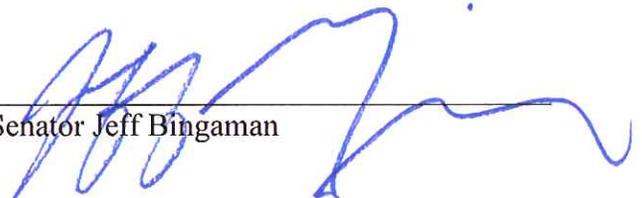
Senator John F. Kerry



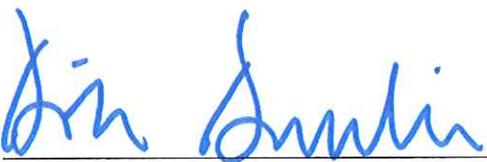
Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand



Senator Tom Udall



Senator Jeff Bingaman



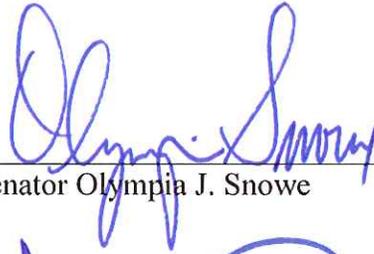
Senator Richard J. Durbin



Senator Sheldon Whitehouse



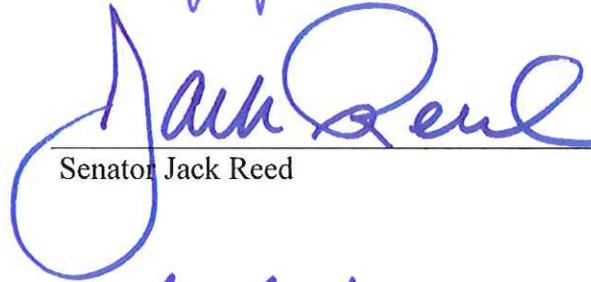
Senator Richard Blumenthal



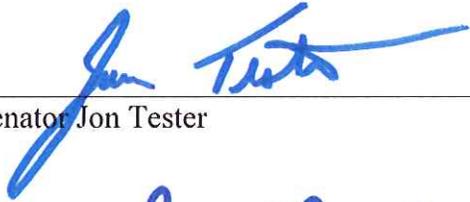
Senator Olympia J. Snowe



Senator Barbara Boxer



Senator Jack Reed



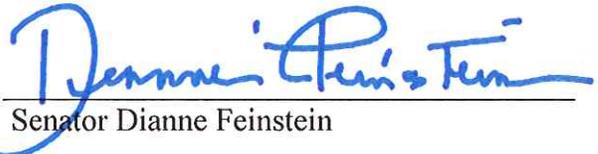
Senator Jon Tester



Senator Carl Levin



Senator Frank R. Lautenberg



Senator Dianne Feinstein



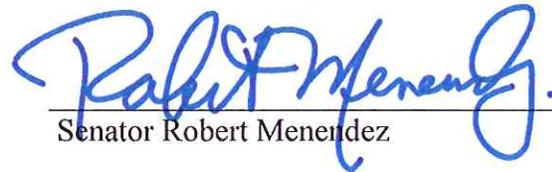
Senator Jeanne Shaheen



Senator Benjamin L. Cardin



Senator Charles E. Schumer



Senator Robert Menendez



Senator Jeff Merkley