

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 13, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, and Education Appropriations
136 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, and Education Appropriations
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

We write to thank you for your strong support of the Federal TRIO programs and to request that you provide robust funding for these programs in the fiscal year (FY) 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill. We also urge you to reject proposals to consolidate or eliminate any of the TRIO programs, or to significantly change these programs, which meet the needs of different populations of eligible students. As a result of your leadership, these programs have been able to expand their reach to serve even more low-income, first-generation students in recent years.

Through TRIO, the federal government works to assure that all students – regardless of background – have equal access to a college education. Without the intervention of the Federal TRIO Programs, students who are from low-income families; students who would be the first persons in their families to earn college degrees; students with disabilities; and many others would not receive the supportive services necessary to consider pursuing and persisting toward a college education.

TRIO programs often make the difference in a student's ability to attend and complete a college program. TRIO provides college coaching, experiential learning, and assistance in applying to and paying for college. TRIO also offers academic tutoring, personal mentoring and advising, assistance with college transfer, and other retention services to ensure higher graduation rates. In the case of adult learners, in particular, TRIO provides the opportunity for such students to reorient themselves to the classroom and the support necessary to balance higher education with the responsibilities of career and family.

TRIO programs have a strong record of success in transforming low-income, first-generation students into college graduates. The Department of Education reported that in recent years, between 80 and 85 percent of high school students who participated in TRIO's pre-college youth programs enrolled immediately in postsecondary education. The Department also found that participants in TRIO's undergraduate retention program graduated at a rate that outpaced other low-income and first-generation students and students with disabilities in need of academic support who did not participate in the program. This was true among students at both two-year colleges and four-year colleges.

Given its strong performance, we hope you will continue to support economic prosperity for all low-income, first-generation students and students with disabilities by providing strong funding for the Federal TRIO Programs in FY 2019.

Sincerely,


Susan M. Collins
United States Senator


Jon Tester
United States Senator


Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator


Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator


Cory A. Booker
United States Senator


Sherrod Brown
United States Senator


Maria Cantwell
United States Senator


Ben Cardin
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United States Senator

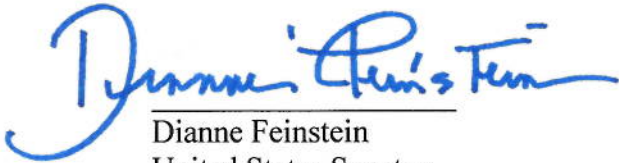

Catherine Cortez Masto
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United States Senator



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United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



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United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



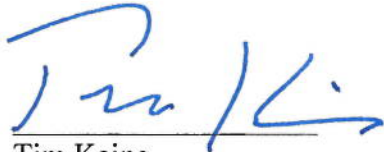
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



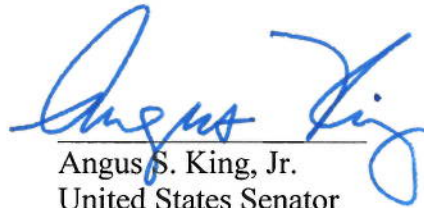
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United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator




Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



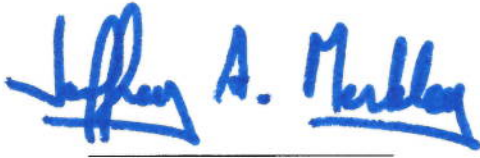
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Mark R. Warner
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Elizabeth Warren
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Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator