



AN OPEN LETTER TO THE NEW ENGLAND CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION:
TAKE A STAND AND FIGHT TO PRESERVE THE FEDERAL TRIO AND GEAR UP
PROGRAMS

July 18, 2011

To the New England Congressional Delegation:

We, the undersigned institutions, write to you on behalf of a set of educational access programs that have had a tremendous impact on the lives of low-income, first-generation students and students with disabilities from across New England, and, indeed, the nation as a whole for nearly five decades – namely, the Federal TRIO and GEAR UP programs. Currently, more than 75,000 students – from sixth-graders to doctoral candidates, from military veterans to displaced workers – receive academic tutoring, college and career counseling, and other supports through 137 TRIO and GEAR UP programs throughout the region, including Educational Talent Search, Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, Veterans Upward Bound, Student Support Services Programs, the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement programs, and Educational Opportunity Centers. The programs are largely located at colleges and universities.

Over the years, TRIO and GEAR UP have produced remarkable results at our institutions; moreover, they have become a staple in our local communities. The thousands of successful alumni of the New England programs include Actress Viola Davis; Astronaut Franklin Chang-Diaz; Coach and Olympic medalist Patrick Ewing; and CNN Commentator Steve Perry. Yet, in the most recently enacted appropriations legislation, H.R. 1473, Congress cut TRIO by \$26.6 million and GEAR UP by \$20.4 million. This cut will strip services away from approximately 75,000 TRIO students across the nation this year alone. As you and your colleagues on Capitol Hill engage in the difficult task of setting federal funding priorities over the next several months, we ask that you fight to prevent such losses from happening. We need each of you to protect funding for TRIO and GEAR UP.

There has been an increase in the number of low-income Americans and more and more individuals are turning to the classroom in this time of economic distress. Jobless adults – civilians and veterans – are looking to get retrained. Therefore, this is a time to shore up – and not decrease – services to our most vulnerable students. We urge you to fight to defend TRIO and GEAR UP in the policy debates surrounding education funding. The futures of tens of thousands of low-income and disabled Americans across New England hang in the balance.

Sincerely,

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