Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Capitol Building, H-232
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Capitol Building, H-204
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

May 6, 2020

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Chair Lowey, Ranking Member Granger, Chair DeLauro, and Ranking Member Cole:

Thank you for your swift, bipartisan action to respond to the health and economic impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). As you prepare for a fourth economic relief package, we respectfully request **significant funding to be allocated to Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO)** to support vulnerable students and their families impacted by the virus.

COVID-19 has disrupted the learning of millions of students at all levels of education. Both pre-college and undergraduate students have lost invaluable and formative academic experiences. These students are missing out on more than graduation ceremonies and exams; their academic and personal lives have been destabilized, and their career prospects have been shaken. Many students are in dire need of immediate, comprehensive support during this time of academic and economic uncertainty.

The pandemic's impact on communities is not evenly spread. Low-income students, students with disabilities, first-generation students, students of color, and military veterans—all of whom already face greater obstacles to their learning experiences—will likely encounter a more substantial impact from COVID-19. These students are at risk of falling through the cracks of our system and permanently losing a chance to pursue higher levels of education.

TRIO helps ensure that vulnerable students, like military veterans, low-income, first-generation youth, students with disabilities, and students who are homeless children and youth or are in foster care or aging out of the foster system, receive the support they need to progress through the academic pipeline. Through a set of outreach and student services programs, TRIO works to mitigate existing disparities in access and assistance for high school, adult, and disconnected students to enter and succeed in college, including preparation for graduate school. Their programs not only enrich individuals academically, but they also enhance our workforce's

economic prospects by empowering more people to earn high school diplomas and post-secondary degrees.

Considering TRIO's substantial benefits to vulnerable students, we ask you to make the following investments to help expand TRIO's capacity to meet the economic recovery needs of students and their families. As detailed below, this investment will allow TRIO to address immediate problems related to service delivery as colleges move courses and services online, as well as long-term problems as the economic impact of COVID-19 makes more students eligible for TRIO services.

1. **Significant funding to bolster all TRIO programs.**
   A significant increase in overall program capacity would allow thousands more vulnerable students to receive support. TRIO would immediately expand its academic tutoring and counseling, peer mentoring, and financial literacy programs throughout all TRIO programs: Student Support Services, Upward Bound, Veterans Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math/Science, McNair Scholars, Educational Opportunity Centers, and Talent Search. In addition, targeted increases to the following two programs would be especially valuable to help displaced workers and low-income families facing the immediate economic shock caused by COVID-19:
   - **Significant funding to Educational Opportunity Centers (EOCs).**
     A significant increase in program capacity would allow thousands more unemployed and low-income adults to receive support related to pursuing their GED, financial aid and college admissions applications, and financial and career counseling. EOCs target displaced or underemployed workers from low-income families for academic and financial counseling supports. This program will be up for re-competition in FY21—making an infusion of funds both now and in fiscal year 2021 critical to help existing and new centers expand their services to help displaced workers, including:
     - Services for improving financial and economic literacy, including basic personal income, housing money management, and financial planning; and
     - Counseling and financial literacy instruction, career counseling, and public information on postsecondary education and training.
   - **Significant funding to Talent Search.**
     A significant increase in program capacity would allow substantially more low-income, first-generation middle and high school students to receive assistance with college preparation and applications. Like the EOC program, Talent Search is up for re-competition in FY21, making an infusion of funds both now and in fiscal year 2021 critical to help existing and new grantees help serve students in this uncertain time. The abrupt closure of schools this spring has disrupted the educational paths of many youth. Ensuring that students do not fall behind and stay on their path of postsecondary preparation will require deliberate and targeted action by TRIO programs and personnel.

2. **Significant funding to technology support for students and families.**
   Technology support would help the estimated 45 percent of current TRIO students who do not have access to broadband internet, educational hardware (e.g., laptops and tablets), and software to continue academic work and support services online. Currently, students

without reliable home internet access or necessary hardware are unable to fully participate in online classrooms, exams, college and financial aid applications, and support services, and these students face substantial disadvantages to their learning. Providing technology support through the TRIO programs could help these students connect immediately.

We thank you for your support of these vital programs for our nation's most vulnerable students and their families. Increased funding is critical to help current TRIO grantees expand their capacity to support students during this unprecedented pandemic. We look forward to working with you on the next relief bill to ensure our most vulnerable students are supported.

Sincerely,





Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress

Jefferson Van Drew
Member of Congress

Glenn "GT" Thompson
Member of Congress

Thomas R Suozzi
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

Sylvia R. Garcia
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James R. Langevin
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Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress

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John Garamendi
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TJ Cox
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Jerrold Nadler
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Debbie Dingell
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Salud Carbajal
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Paul D. Tonko
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Robin L. Kelly
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Henry Cuellar
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David N. Cicilline
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Ted W. Lieu
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Collin C. Peterson
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A. Donald McEachin
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Don Young
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Terri A. Sewell
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Joe Neguse
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Stephen F. Lynch
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Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
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Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
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Susie Lee
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Jenniffer González-Colón
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Jason Crow
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Joaquin Castro
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Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
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Eddie Bernice Johnson
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Emanuel Cleaver, II
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Kathy Castor
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Fred Upton
Member of Congress