

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 9, 2015

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

First and foremost, allow us to thank you for your stewardship over the Federal TRIO Programs in the FY 2015 omnibus legislation. In addition to providing a funding increase, your Subcommittee took the monumental step of including a legislative directive to the U.S. Department of Education to ensure the timely delivery and notification of the results of the Student Support Services grant competition, which is currently underway. Both actions affirmed the recognition by your Subcommittee of the enduring need for the critical, life-changing services provided by TRIO.

In FY 2016, we urge you to strengthen your commitment to the low-income, first-generation students of America by supporting a significant increase in TRIO funding. In particular, we hope the Subcommittee will provide sufficient funding to restore services to the 53,000 students who have lost access to TRIO since FY 2009. Indeed, by boosting funds to TRIO's pre-college programs – including Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, and Veterans Upward Bound – as well as strengthening the reach of TRIO's undergraduate programs – Student Support Services and McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement – this Subcommittee will take critical steps to address the non-financial needs of low-income, first-generation students while also shoring up our national investment in federal financial aid programs such as the Pell Grant.

FY 2016 also presents the opportunity to expand TRIO's Talent Search and Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) programs, both of which are scheduled for new grant competitions during FY 2016.

Each of these programs provides pre-college assistance for students who would become the first persons in their families to earn college degrees. The Talent Search program works with students in middle and high school to provide early exposure to the college and financial aid application processes. More specifically, the program provides hands-on support by ensuring that students engage in a college preparatory curriculum, preparing students for college entrance examinations, providing assistance in locating scholarships and other financial aid, and helping students select the best colleges to suit their needs and fulfill their aspirations.

Educational Opportunity Centers provide similar services to those noted above. However, EOC generally focuses on an older student population – including low-wage or displaced workers. EOC works with clients to provide assistance in college (re-)entry, thereby addressing the challenges faced by students who have dropped out of high school or college. Quite often, EOC clients turn to pursue higher education as a means of enhancing their families' economic viability.

We are pleased that the Department of Education recognized the potential of TRIO to address the challenges in college access and success, such as retention and college re-entry, through its FY 2016 budget request. Such enhanced supports are necessary because as recently as 2013, there was a 78 percentage point difference between the bachelor's degree attainment rates of students who entered college from the top income quartile (99% degree attainment) as compared with students from the bottom income quartile (21% degree attainment). *Indicators of Higher Education Equity In The United States - 45 Year Trend Report*. Washington, DC: Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, 2015. Given this sobering fact, among many others, we support the Department in its efforts to address equity issues through TRIO and urge the Subcommittee to build on the restoration contemplated above by implementing the agency's budget proposal.

Ultimately, the Federal TRIO Programs help secure the promise embedded in the Higher Education Act of 1965. As this year marks the 50th anniversary of this landmark legislation, we hope that this Subcommittee will seize the opportunity to allow more Americans to overcome the non-financial barriers that prevent them from earning a degree or certificate by providing a significant funding increase for the Federal TRIO Programs.

Sincerely,



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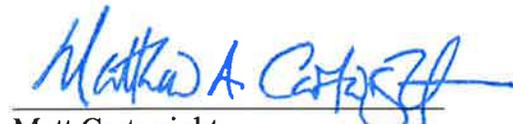
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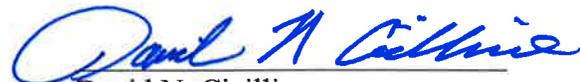
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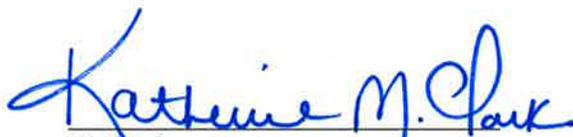
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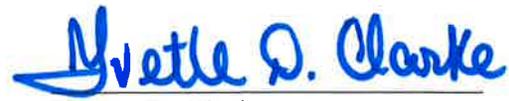
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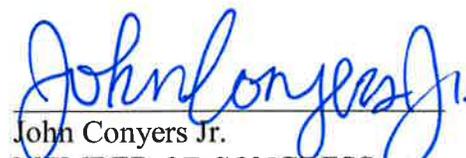
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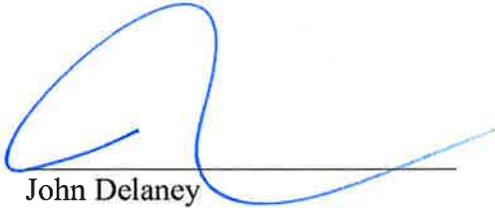
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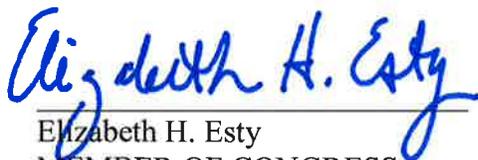
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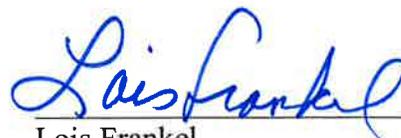
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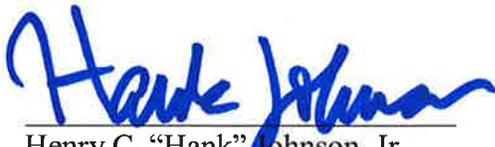
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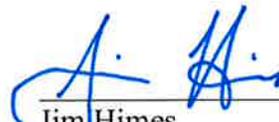
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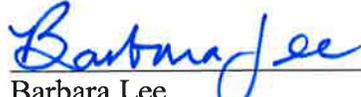


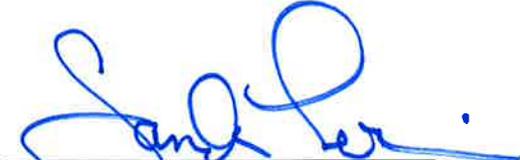
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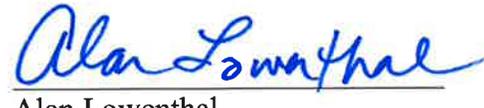

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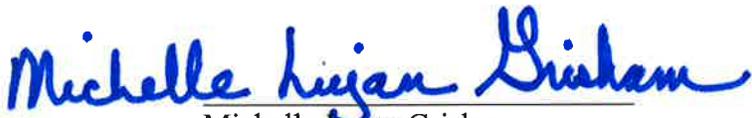

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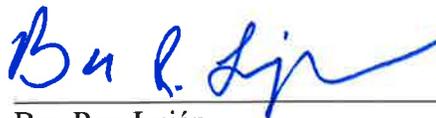

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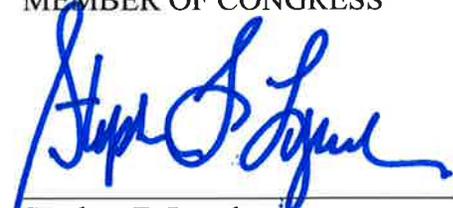

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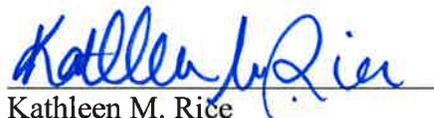

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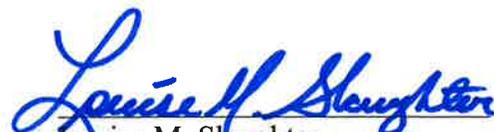

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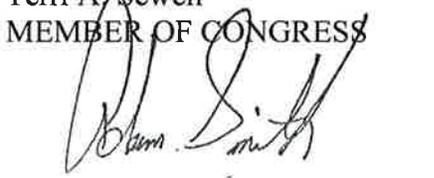

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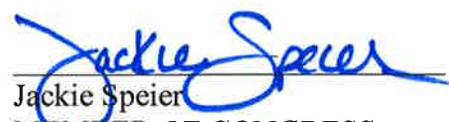

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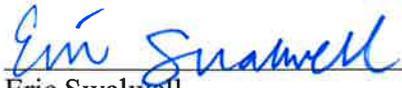

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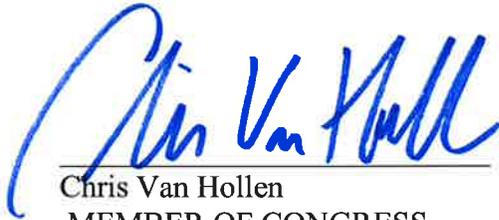
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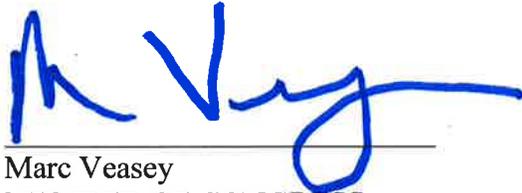
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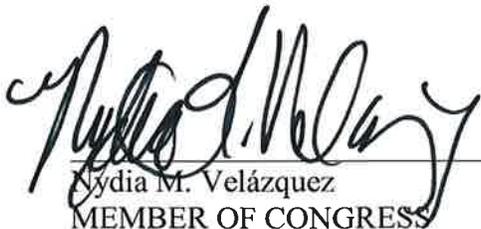
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