Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 11, 2003

The Honorable Ralph Regula
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education
House Appropriations Committee
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Obey
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Regula and Ranking Member Obey:

We are writing to bring to your attention our strong support for a substantial increase in the Fiscal Year 2004 appropriations bill for the TRIO Programs, one of the most important education programs designed to advance equal opportunities in America's colleges and universities.

Over 1,200 colleges, universities and agencies offer TRIO Programs throughout the United States, and an estimated two million TRIO students have graduated from college. However, even with all of this success, TRIO programs currently only serve an estimated 7 percent of those students who are eligible for the programs.

While TRIO Programs provide quality educational services to students from low-income families where neither parent graduated from college, they cannot continue to expand these services to all eligible students without a significant increase in their annual appropriations.

The Subcommittee is to be commended for its strong commitment to the TRIO Programs over the past few years as it has expanded student access to the program. While we understand the need to balance priorities within your Subcommittee, we hope you will agree that the TRIO Programs need a substantial increase in Fiscal Year 2004 to continue providing vital educational services to the students who depend on the program, and the millions of others who currently do not have access to a college education without the assistance of TRIO.

Thank you for considering our request to provide a substantial increase for TRIO Programs in Fiscal Year 2004. We look forward to working with you to support this important program.

Howard P. "Buck" McKeon

Donald Payne

Johnny Isakson

Dale Kildee

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