

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 24, 2018

The Honorable Betsy DeVos  
Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave. S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

We write to you regarding the Fiscal Year 2018 omnibus package (P.L. 115-141) that included a \$60 million increase for federal TRIO programs. We ask that you score the applications from the FY 2017 TRIO competitions that had minor technical and budgetary issues as directed by the accompanying report language. In addition, we ask that you provide a funding increase for all current TRIO grantees. Students who are the first in their families to go to college often face additional hurdles that TRIO programs prepare them to overcome. Given the vital importance of these programs to improve college readiness, access, selection, and degree completion for underrepresented students, we urge you to seize this opportunity to fund additional promising grantees to meet the needs of our country's diverse students.

Congress designed the six TRIO programs to support veterans and students who are low-income, first-generation in college, have disabilities, or are homeless or foster youth in their path to access and succeed in postsecondary education. Participating high school students benefit from college and career awareness, academic tutoring, and support completing their financial aid and college application forms. Additionally, undergraduates benefit from academic and social supports, personal and career counseling, and other wrap-around supports that enable them to stay on track for graduation.

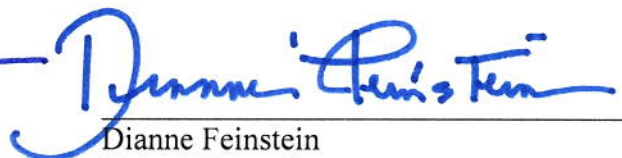
The additional \$60 million in TRIO funding can allow additional schools, nonprofits and institutions of higher education to address the unmet needs of thousands of motivated students eager to build their path to the middle class through higher education. The Secretary has always recognized the need to retain flexibility when there are extra funds available in a given fiscal year, as is the case in FY 2018, to fund a new cohort of grantees from unfunded applications in prior application cycles. This recognition has been made clear in every Federal Register announcement detailing applications for new awards.

We urge the Department to review unfunded applications in the most recent previous TRIO competition and to award the additional \$60 million to the most promising proposals and provide an increase to existing programs as soon as possible. Additionally, we request that you provide us with all the relevant information, in writing, regarding the Department's process for reviewing and scoring as well as a timeline for awarding grants to the newly funded applicants. We also reiterate our directive in the omnibus package that the Department review all applications under fiscal year 2017 TRIO competitions that had minor technical issues, including those with minor budget issues, when making additional awards. Our nation's students cannot wait.

Sincerely,



Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



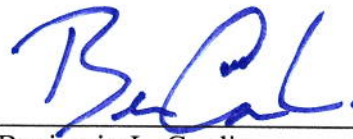
Tina Smith  
United States Senator



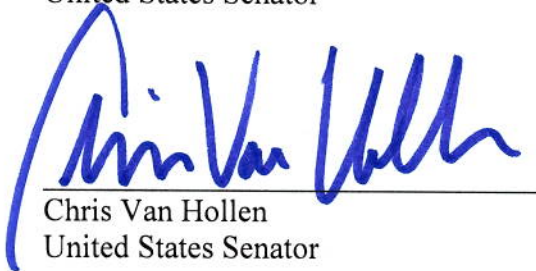
Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Cory Booker  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator