

NCWGE NATIONAL COALITION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN EDUCATION

March 16, 2005

Dear Senators:


On behalf of the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE), a non-profit coalition comprised of more than 50 diverse organizations committed to improving educational opportunities for women and girls, we urge you to support the Kennedy (D-MA) Higher Education/Job Training Budget amendment to restore funding to vital education programs slated for elimination by the Senate budget resolution.

The Administration's FY 2006 budget includes \$56 billion in budget authority for Department of Education discretionary programs, which represents a cut of \$530 million below the FY 2005 enacted level. The Senate budget resolution endorses the Administration's overall discretionary budget, thus implicitly endorsing the cuts to education programs; the first cut to education since 1996. If passed, the Senate budget resolution would provide additional tax cuts to the wealthy while at the same time calling for deep cuts in key priorities for the American people. In fact, one in three programs slated for elimination in the budget is in education.

We are deeply concerned about the steep cuts to education and training programs in the Senate budget resolution, which by necessity appear to include the elimination of the Perkins Vocational and Technical Education program, adult basic education programs, and higher education programs like TRIO, GEAR UP, and the Perkins loan program while failing to commit adequate resources to the Perkins Grant program. Many Americans depend on these programs to help them obtain postsecondary education, become more competitive in the job market, prepare for high-tech careers and earn a good living for themselves and their families.

NCWGE believes these vital education and training programs play a central role in our nation's strategy to prepare Americans for the 21st century workforce. Over the coming decades, the demand for higher skilled workers will grow; simultaneously, our nation's skilled labor pool is diminishing. Now is the time to invest in education and training programs to ensure that our nation will remain competitive in the global economy. Moreover, for many women, including displaced homemakers, single mothers, and welfare recipients, these programs represent a lifeline to economic self-sufficiency. We urge you to support the Kennedy amendment to the Senate budget resolution. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lisa Maatz, American Association of University Women, at 202/785-7720, or Jocelyn Samuels, National Women's Law Center, at 202/588-5180.

Sincerely,



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