

NCWGE

NATIONAL COALITION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN EDUCATION

March 17, 2005

Dear Senators:

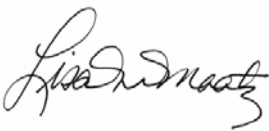
On behalf of the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE), a non-profit coalition comprised of more than 50 diverse organizations committed to improving educational opportunities for women and girls, we urge you to support the Clinton/Levin GEAR UP-TRIO Budget amendment to restore funding to these 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 higher education programs like TRIO and GEAR UP. These programs are the only federal programs that are exclusively targeted at providing college awareness for underserved students in middle school and high school. Currently, TRIO programs help approximately 455,000 middle and high school students with college preparation. Last year more than 74,000 young people from these programs went on to college. These students were four times more likely to earn an undergraduate degree than those from similar backgrounds who did not participate in TRIO programs. Moreover, since 1999, GEAR UP has encouraged more than 2.3 million students from low-income families to prepare early for college. Without these programs, many low income students would lose this valuable assistance.

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. We urge you to support the Clinton/Levin GEAR UP-TRIO Budget 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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