

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 18, 2012

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan,

We write to you to express our concerns about changes to the Fiscal Year 2012 Upward Bound (UB) program competition. The UB program is one of six Federal TRIO programs, which have proven to be among the most successful and important federally funded programs for students. More than 2,900 TRIO projects currently serve nearly 800,000 low-income Americans. We believe the Department's latest UB competition had some significant issues which will harm students who benefit from these life-changing educational programs in our states. We urge you to review the latest competition and ask that your staff provide detailed information on the issues discussed in this letter.

We are concerned with the latest UB competition results, which eliminated 23 percent of existing programs and closed the door on an estimated 5,000 students. We feel that new competitive priorities as well as delayed and inconsistent competition deadlines had an impact on the applications of existing programs in our states. There is particular concern that programs in states classified as "rural" (i.e., have fewer inhabitants per square mile than the national average) were hit disproportionately, as well as the troubling development that all but two tribal institutions have lost their UB funding.

In order to prepare and inspire our students to be the leaders and innovators of tomorrow, we need to invest in programs that give them the necessary tools to fulfill their potential. As you know, the UB program prepares low-income, first-generation and minority students for opportunities to succeed in higher education. In 2005, 77.3 percent of all students who participated in the UB programs immediately went to college, compared to 38 percent of national, low income, high school seniors. This number increases to 91.2 percent of students who participated in UB for at least three years.

We appreciate the support you have shown for these programs, and we ask that you continue to support the great work of the Upward Bound program. Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you in addressing these concerns.

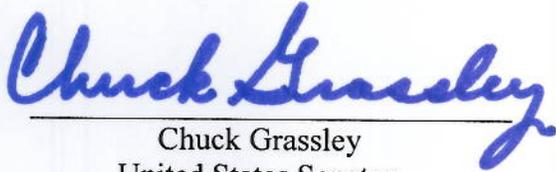
Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



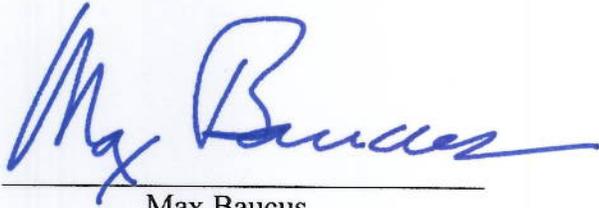
Jon Tester
United States Senator



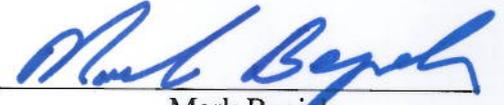
Chuck Grassley
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



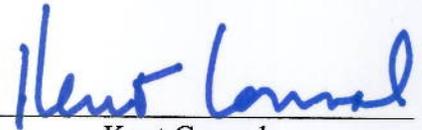
Max Baucus
United States Senator



Mark Begich
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Kent Conrad
United States Senator



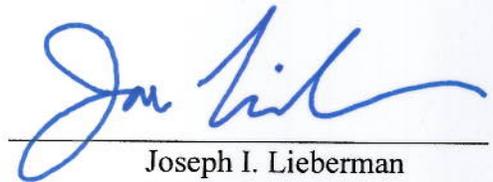
Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator



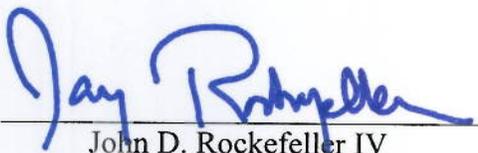
John Hoeven
United States Senator



Herb Kohl
United States Senator



Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator



John D. Rockefeller IV
United States Senator