



February 16, 2011

Dear Representative:

We write to strongly oppose H.R. 1, which funds the federal government through the remainder of FY 2011. The bill would result in massive cuts to programs that serve the neediest, most vulnerable members of our society. This bill, if passed, will decimate many education programs proven to be effective in educating minority youth while sending billions of dollars to predatory for-profit colleges that consistently leave students of color, and low-income students, buried in debt and with worthless degrees.

In particular, we protest the proposal to reduce funding of the Federal TRIO Programs by \$24.9 million. Due to the cyclical nature of the TRIO grant process as well as the expiration of mandatory funding that currently supports nearly 200 of TRIO's Upward Bound programs, we know with certainty that if enacted, this funding cut would kick 87,000 vulnerable middle and high school students out of the TRIO programs. The students who participate in TRIO rely on the comprehensive support services provided by these programs. TRIO provides intensive academic tutoring, college and career counseling, financial aid advising, and personal mentoring that enables low-income students to achieve their goal of becoming the first in their families to earn college degrees. Such losses would be devastating not only to the students themselves, but to their families, their schools, and their local communities.

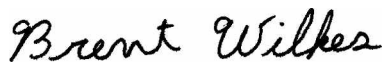
TRIO touches every corner of the United States and serves every type of community – from urban to rural, from Native American reservations to federal territories. Additionally, TRIO students themselves represent a cross-section of needs as they range from sixth-graders to doctoral candidates and include students with disabilities, adult learners, and military veterans. Studies conducted by the Department of Education demonstrate that TRIO students are more likely than their socioeconomic peers to go to college and perform better once there. It is critical that we continue to build on our investment in these students; to do otherwise would halt such progress.

We also stand in unity against Amendment #214 (Foxx-Hastings), which would prohibit the expenditure of funds to enact any regulation relating to gainful employment. Federal law requires career education programs that receive federal student aid to “prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation.” The Department of Education is preparing to enforce the law by issuing a gainful employment regulation that advances a common-sense principle: taxpayer-funded federal financial aid should not go to wasteful career education programs that frequently leave students buried in debt they cannot repay. This amendment would prohibit the Department from moving forward on this regulation and cost taxpayers billions of dollars. Many of these schools receive nearly all of their revenues from federal taxpayer-funded programs. In other words, taxpayer dollars are currently subsidizing institutions that prey on low-income students, minority students and veterans, saddling them with crushing debt, and too often leaving the taxpayer exposed when the bill comes due.

By hindering the regulations process, this amendment blocks any real accountability for career education programs that routinely engage in deceptive and dishonest recruitment practices, provide false or inflated job placement rates to students and have dismal completion rates. We must ensure that our students enroll in programs that prepare them for jobs, and that those jobs enable them to repay their students loans. Career education programs that receive federal student aid funds must be held accountable for training students for good jobs-- without saddling them with unmanageable debt financed by billions in federal student loan resources.

We hope that you can support us in our opposition to H.R. 1 and the amendments which will only hurt minority youth. If you have any questions, please contact Kimberly Jones, COE Associate Vice President for Public Policy, at kimberly.jones@coenet.us or 202-489-6745, or Iris Chavez, LULAC Education Policy Coordinator, at ichavez@lulac.org or 202-833-6130.

Sincerely,



Brent Wilkes
Executive Director
League of United Latin American Citizens



Arnold Mitchem
President
Council for Opportunity in Education