Senator Manchin and Senator Cornyn invite your boss to join us in signing the attached letter in support of FY 2024 funding for GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). This comprehensive grant program, authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act, is currently providing 500,000 students across 43 states with the necessary support to ensure that they are ready for college and career.

GEAR UP was funded at $388 million in FY 2023. This letter asks for continued investment in the program by providing robust funding.

Please contact Audrey Smith with Senator Manchin at Audrey_Smith@manchin.senate.gov or Alaura Ervin with Senator Cornyn at Alaura_Ervin@cornyn.senate.gov if your boss would like to join. Also, please include how your boss prefers their name to appear on the signature line.

The deadline to join the letter is April 4th, 2023 at COB.

Current signers for FY24: Manchin and Cornyn

Dear Chair Murray, Vice Chair Collins, Chair Baldwin, and Ranking Member Capito:

We want to thank the Subcommittee for your continued support and recognition of the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). As you consider the difficult and important work of appropriating precious public resources for the FY 2024 Labor, Health, Human Services and Education Subcommittee, we urge you to continue the Subcommittee’s strong investment in GEAR UP and request that you provide robust funding for this program.

At a time where 65% of jobs will require some postsecondary training, ensuring that students are prepared for and succeed in higher education is essential for our nation’s economic, civic, and social wellbeing. Yet for far too many students, postsecondary education remains out of reach. This cost-effective college readiness program has helped millions of low-income students progress on the pathway to college and build a more stable future for themselves, their communities and our nation.

Data shared by the U.S. Department of Education on the most sizeable class of GEAR UP students affirms the impact that the program is having on young people. GEAR UP high school graduates are enrolling immediately into postsecondary education at rates substantially higher (87.8% in 2020) than the national average for low-income students (49%). The GEAR UP program is truly a locally driven, highly flexible model for closing achievement gaps and creating opportunity.

Given this success, an increase to GEAR UP funding would allow the U.S. Department of Education to better meet the needs of communities nationwide and would help to ensure that states and communities can compete for new awards. GEAR UP has demonstrated tremendous success with nearly 500,000 students across a diverse range of backgrounds in large cities, rural areas, and everywhere in between, and is currently active in 43 states across the nation. The proven model starts early in low-income middle schools and follows students through high school and into their first year of college. By incorporating scholarship funds, expanding access to rigorous academic courses, tutoring, mentoring, financial literacy, and intensive college and career planning, GEAR UP builds college-going cultures in schools where even high school graduation cannot be taken for granted.

At a time of tight budgets, we have to invest every dollar responsibly. GEAR UP’s proven track record, as well as its critical role in building our economy, makes it a truly worthwhile investment.

Sincerely,