

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 23, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Baldwin:

We want to thank the Subcommittee for its 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 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee, we urge you to continue the Subcommittee's investment in GEAR UP. We hope that a continuing dialogue between Congress and the Administration during the appropriations process will strengthen the program and lead to continued funding for GEAR UP.

Data shared by the U.S. Department of Education on the GEAR UP Class of 2022 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 (81.6% in 2022) than the national average for low-income students (52.4%). The GEAR UP program is truly a locally driven, highly flexible model for creating opportunity, improving schools, and strengthening communities.

Given this success, funding GEAR UP 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 is currently active in 44 states, serving over 568,000 students across a diverse range of backgrounds in large cities, rural areas, and everywhere in between. 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, work-based learning, and intensive college and career planning, GEAR UP builds college-going cultures in schools where even high school graduation cannot be taken for granted.

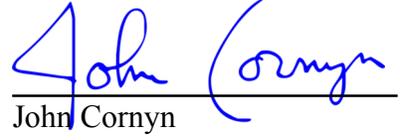
At a time of tight budgets, we must invest every dollar responsibly. GEAR UP's proven track

record, as well as its critical role in building our economy, makes it a truly worthwhile investment.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
U.S. Senator



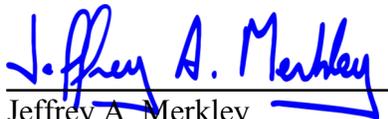
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Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
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Jeffrey A. Merkley
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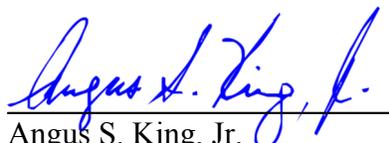
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



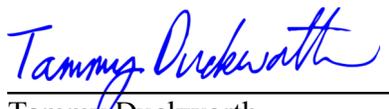
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



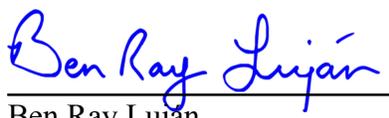
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator


Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

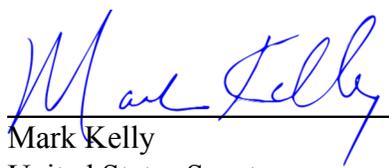

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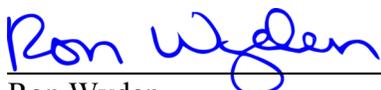
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United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Elissa Slotkin
United States Senator