

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Urges congressional leaders to support vulnerable students amid coronavirus crisis

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin joined a bipartisan group of 40 senators led by Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Susan Collins (R-ME), Jon Tester (D-MT) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) in pressing congressional leadership to include in the upcoming coronavirus relief package significant funding for the Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO), which are integral to supporting vulnerable students and their families that have been impacted by the virus.

The senators' letter comes as the economic fallout of the coronavirus crisis continues to exacerbate existing inequities in education—from significant losses of income to a lack of access to tools, such as reliable internet access, that are essential to participating in remote learning.

“Low-income students, students with disabilities, first-generation students, youth who are homeless, have limited English proficiency, and who are in foster care, students in rural communities, and military veterans all already face greater obstacles to their learning experiences and now are often encountering a more substantial impact from COVID-19,” **the senators wrote in their letter to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy.** *“These*

students are at risk of falling through the cracks of our system and permanently losing a chance to pursue higher levels of education.”

TRIO helps support these students through a set of outreach and student services programs that mitigate existing disparities in access and assistance. The programs enrich individual students academically and also strengthen the American workforce and economy by empowering more students to complete their high school education and pursue higher education degrees.

“A significant increase in overall program capacity would allow significantly more vulnerable students to receive support that is critical to their success and to the economy’s revival, such as academic tutoring and counseling; financial literacy programs; assistance with postsecondary planning, college admissions applications, and career counseling; peer and adult mentoring; work-study opportunities; and connections to wrap-around services that make high school and college completion more likely,” **the senators continued.**

Senators Baldwin, Murkowski, Merkley, Collins, and Tester were joined in sending the letter by U.S. Senators Mike Crapo (R-ID), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Thom Tillis (R-NC), Brian Schatz (D-HI), James Risch (R-ID), Cory Booker (D-NJ), John Boozman (R-AK), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Martha McSally (R-AZ), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Kamala D. Harris (D-CA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Angus King (I-ME), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Thomas R. Carper (D-DE), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH).