**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: [YOUR NAME HERE]**

**[DAY, DATE, AND TIME] TEL.: [YOUR PHONE HERE]**

**Special to [Name of Paper]:**

**“All Students Deserve Equal Access to Education” by [YOUR NAME]**

**(750 words)**

Educational equity is imperative for our children and society. All students need resources to access and succeed in postsec- ondary education and beyond, which will benefit our children and support economic growth and strengthen the safety and security of Americans in every community. Congress needs to work together to find a balanced approach to continue educa- tional funding for programs, such as GEAR UP.

Think about it: if America is to remain strong, secure and competitive in the world, our students need training far more rigorous than what we experienced as children. A child in the third grade today will need advanced training in math, sci- ence, reading and technology just to keep pace with children in Finland, India and Japan. With the technological, scientific and medical advances of today, one can only imagine the demanding academic curriculum that awaits a child born five years from now.

No question about it: our students will have to set their sights high to maintain the discipline needed to complete such a rig- orous program of learning. That’s why Congress needs to protect and continue to support programs like GEAR UP or “Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs,” which Congress created in 1998.

The key word is “Early.” Unlike other efforts to improve academic achievement, GEAR UP begins working with students as early as middle school. GEAR UP doesn’t just help the students for a year or two; it remains actively involved in their aca- demic lives from middle school through the first year of college. GEAR UP helps children living in low-income communities realize their potential—to open their eyes to opportunities and help them perform to their maximum ability.

GEAR UP doesn’t work with just a few individual students. The program focuses on entire classes—many first-generation students. GEAR UP supports these children in and outside the [NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION](https://www.edpartnerships.org/) [PARTNERSHIPS](https://www.edpartnerships.org/), getting parents, local business partners and community organizations involved in the children’s educational team.

This program uses effective educational strategies and research‐based program models. GEAR UP is gaining universal praise for its selectivity in building upon strategies that have already proven themselves, and for its willingness to jettison those practices that haven’t served students well.

One of the things that I like most about GEAR UP is that Washington has put its faith in parents and local school systems, not bureaucrats. With GEAR UP, local schools are given the flexibility to help children perform to their fullest potential. Any- body who thinks students can be taught by remote control from Washington or [State Capitol] has been outside a classroom too long. Parents, teachers, guidance counselors and principals alike, desperately need for bureaucratic strings to be cut so

our children can learn. This job has provided me with many opportunities to meet our local educators: the

dedicated people who care about our students and who achieve miracles every day. What they need are adequate tools, not second‐guessing from politicians and remote government agencies.

If children are to truly enhance their academic performance; however, it will take more than just parents and teachers, guidance counselors and principals. This is a big job, and it takes a team to finish it: extended family, business and commu- nity groups, places of worship, virtually everybody who comes in contact with a youngster has to help set the framework, encourage him or her to aim high, and then be willing to help these students to achieve their dreams.

GEAR UP is unique—it brings everyone to the table to serve student achievement. GEAR UP recognizes if every child has the right to a quality education, none of us can afford to stand aside. Each one of us should get involved—no exceptions, no excuses. By bringing together community resources, families and educators, GEAR UP has the potential to make a real difference in the lives of our children. It already does so for more than 580 thousand students across America.

I encourage you to urge your Members of Congress to work together to find a balanced approach to deficit reduction that does not jeopardize the future prosperity of our country by cutting bipartisan, national priorities, which strengthen our com- munities and support economic growth. Programs such as GEAR UP really make a difference for students in low‐income and disadvantaged communities, and each of us—elected officials, businesspeople, teachers, parents and community mem- bers—needs to “gear up” to provide our children a brighter future.

The author is the GEAR UP Coach in [Your Grant Name here] in [Your State Here].

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