

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**KENNEDY DISCUSSES THE COLLEGE COST CRUNCH AT THE EDUCATION  
RESOURCE INSTITUTE IN BROCKTON**

***ANNOUNCES \$3.5 MILLION FEDERAL TRIO GRANT FOR NEW COLLEGE ACCESS  
CENTER***

BOSTON, MA- Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy discussed the college cost crunch on Massachusetts students and opened The Education Resources Institute's (TERI) new college access center in Brockton. As ranking member on the United States Senate's Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, Senator Kennedy has been a lifelong advocate for increasing educational opportunities for all students.

“As families come face to face with the rapidly evolving global economy, they have seen the value of their wages decline, the cost of living go up, and their jobs sent overseas. More than ever, our young men and women need a college education, so that they thrive in the global economy and enable our country to thrive as well,” Senator Kennedy said. “That’s why the TRIO programs are so important. Forty years ago, Congress recognized the need for special programs to help low-income, first-generation students get to college. TERI has been a leader in that mission here in Massachusetts for more than two decades.”

Kennedy and Lynch have secured over \$3.5 million in federal TRIO grants under the U.S. Department of Education to support educational opportunity programs operated by TERI, benefiting Brockton's low-income, first generation residents. Because of this federal funding for its programs, TERI was able to establish this permanent site in Brockton that will serve as a drop-in center for students and adults looking for assistance with college applications, financial aid and tutoring. TERI is a national leader in helping low-income individuals achieve access to education.

**REMARKS OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY  
TERI BROCKTON COLLEGE ACCESS CENTER  
OCTOBER 16, 2006**

***(AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY)***

It’s a privilege to be here to celebrate all you do here at the Institute. I’m delighted to announce the \$3.5 million in new federal TRIO grants that TERI is receiving to support its work in Boston and at the College Access Center here in Brockton.

With these additional federal dollars, TERI will be able to increase the number of students and citizens it serves by a third, from 1100 to 1750 per year.

The five-year TRIO Talent Search grants we’re announcing today will enable more low-income, first generation students in Brockton and Boston to complete high school and enter college. They’ll encourage students who have dropped out to re-enter the school system. And students and families will receive the information they need in order to pay for college.

The four-year TRIO Educational Opportunity Center grant we’re announcing will help low-income,

first-generation adults in Brockton obtain the guidance, mentorship, and information they need on planning for college and other education opportunities.

The work you do here is extraordinary – and it couldn't happen without the special partnership that exists between the Center, the city of Brockton, its school system, and the federal government. I commend each member of that partnership for your success:

- Willis Hulings, the president and CEO of TERI, whom I had the pleasure of meeting earlier this morning;
- Congressman Steve Lynch, for his strong support of the federal TRIO programs;
- Brockton Mayor James Harrington, who's such a staunch advocate for the city and for TERI; and
- Lydie Ultimo, Director of TERI's Brockton TRIO Programs, who has guided them into becoming a city-wide system promoting access to education.

TRIO would not be successful without the close coordination of middle and high schools, colleges and universities, and community agencies. So I'd also like to acknowledge:

- Basan Nembirkow, superintendent of Brockton Public Schools;
- Stonehill College and Massasoit Community College, who work closely with TERI to support its programs in Brockton; and
- The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and Career Works, which provide space to TERI to carry out its mission.

All of us know that a college education is essential for the success of our people and our nation. More than ever today, it's essential for the American Dream.

The modern momentum began in earnest after World War II. We knew we needed to build a strong peacetime economy. So we passed the GI Bill to enable those who had served in war to obtain the benefits of a college education and embark on worthwhile careers. It was perhaps the finest economic decision America ever made. For every dollar we invested, the Greatest Generation returned \$7 to our economic growth.

Today, the stakes are just as high. As families come face to face with the rapidly evolving global economy, they have seen the value of their wages decline, the cost of living go up, and their jobs sent overseas.

More than ever, our young men and women need a college education, so that they thrive in the global

economy and enable our country to thrive as well.

In 1950, when I graduated from school, only 15 percent of jobs required some post-secondary training. Today, that number is over 60 percent and rising rapidly. Tragically, we face a shameful and growing gulf in college attendance between the rich and poor. Each year, 400,000 college-ready students don't attend a four-year college because they can't afford it.

Much like the achievement gap in K-12, there's a shocking gap in college achievement between White and minority students. Only 15 percent of African American students and 10 percent of Latino students obtain bachelor's degrees today, compared to 30 percent of white students.

That's unacceptable. Fairness and justice demand we do all we can to close that gap.

That's why the TRIO programs are so important. Forty years ago, Congress recognized the need for special programs to help low-income, first-generation students get to college. TERI has been a leader in that mission here in Massachusetts for more than two decades.

During that time, you've grown from a small college access program in the Boston Public Library to a full-scale operation that serves nearly 40,000 students and adults a year in Brockton, Boston and Chelsea. Today, you manage 9 college access centers. You give direct services to students in 12 public schools. You operate a toll-free hotline for students and parents to obtain information and advice on planning and paying for college.

Since opening, this Center has helped more than 4,000 low-income, first-generation students receive services to help make their college dream a reality.

Participating in TRIO can make all the difference for students who might not otherwise go to college. Across the country, 95 percent of high school students who participate in the Talent Search program remain in school. 73 percent of college-ready Talent Search participants are admitted to college or a program of postsecondary education. So I know the two Talent Search grants we're announcing today will mean brighter futures for many, many students.

So will the Educational Opportunity Centers grant. These grants do a superb job of guaranteeing that students and adults receive critically-needed services to help them apply to college and obtain financial aid. Nationally, 83 percent of all participants – including 100 percent of all adult participants – receive counseling services. The various services provided are vital for low-income and first-generation students, for whom applying to college and paying for college are extremely daunting prospects.

The successes are impressive, but we know much more needs to be done. The Talent Search program reaches only 2 percent of its target population of low-income and first-generation students. The administration's recent cuts to TRIO have affected 26 of our Commonwealth's 53 TRIO grantees, making it much more difficult for these programs to help all the students they can.

That's why I'm especially glad to be bringing \$3.5 million back to the students of Massachusetts, where it belongs, and I'll continue to fight for more funds for these valuable programs.

From our earliest days as a nation, education has been the engine of the American dream, and we can't let it stall. All students and their parents deserve the support they need to benefit from education and keep our country strong in the years ahead.

TRIO is constantly opening new doors for all students to make the most of their God-given talents,

and showing that we are truly committed to fairness and opportunity for all in higher education.

I look forward to hearing about the great work that each of you will continue to do for our students here in Brockton, and commend you again for the extraordinary difference you're making in their lives. Thank you so much.

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