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April 27, 2022

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro & Ranking Member Cole,

I am requesting \$167,700 under the Fiscal Year 2023, Department of Education, Elementary and Secondary Education – Innovation & Improvement account for the Jobs for Arizona's Graduates, Inc located in Phoenix, AZ 85051. The entity receiving the project is located 3320 W. Cheryl Dr. Ste B220, Phoenix, AZ 85051. The locations of the project are **Desert Oasis Elementary School**, 8802 W. McDowell Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85037 and **Sheely Farms Elementary School**, 9450 W. Encanto Street, Phoenix, AZ 85037

The goal of the Jobs for Arizona's Graduates (JAG) Program is to increase the number of, low-income, first-generation and student of color who graduate on-time and engage in college or employment upon graduation. Last year, 78% of Arizona students graduated on time, compared to 98% of JAG students. JAG students continue to prove that young people can demonstrate incredible resilience and overcome tremendous challenges when given the support to do so. With the dramatic learning loss that has resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic, it is imperative that students receive this support earlier, to ensure they transition into high school ready to meet the academic, social and developmental challenges. By providing JAG programming in both the middle and high schools, JAG creates a bridge to support those students most in need through this key transition.

This request includes JAG Coordinator Salary (\$120,000), JAG Coordinator Taxes and Benefits (\$30,000), JAG Manager Salary (\$15,000) and JAG Manager Taxes and Benefits (\$2,700). Through these funds, JAG will expand the reach of Middle to High School Transition services in the Tolleson and Avondale communities. Funds will add additional staff capacity to the 7th and 8th grade services provided in partnership with the Tolleson Elementary School District, increasing the number of students who can benefit from JAG supports as they prepare for their transition into high school. This support will allow JAG and the Tolleson Elementary District to double the number of students served through JAG programs next year, reaching eighty students on each campus. Additionally, this program is embedded in the school-day as a class, delivered

by a certified teacher or counselor called the JAG Coordinator. The JAG Coordinators role extends beyond that of a teacher, as they engage as a mentor, coach, counselor, and more, during and beyond high school. Students participate in an average of 120 contact hours throughout the school year receiving ongoing individualized academic remediation and guidance/counseling support to address challenges outside of school and participate in competency-based training on the grade level appropriate life, college, and work readiness skills within the JAG curriculum.

This funding request is valuable use of taxpayer funds it will support Arizona students who have been put under further stress with the challenges of remote learning; issues of access, emotional and mental stress, and economic hardship that have disproportionately affected an already marginalized demographics. For decades, JAG has served this population, and worked closely with students and families to address social/emotional, environmental, physical and socio-economic barriers to learning. As Covid-19 has continued to impact JAG youth and families, it has become clear just how critical JAG is to the youth served. JAG Coordinators are unlike any other teacher on campus, as they are put in place as a targeted support for a group of 40-50 students for the full-year, and beyond. While delivering life skills, career and college readiness skills curriculum, JAG Coordinators build rapport with students and families that give them a deeper understanding of, and ability to respond to individualized needs.

The JAG program is a lifeline for students, and now more than ever, they have relied on the supportive relationship of their JAG Coordinator to help them through challenging times. JAG's has a more than 40-year history of serving youth in the Tolleson community, with more than 10 in partnership with Tolleson Elementary School District. The district, and community already invest in the success of these programs, and this is a fantastic opportunity for the community to give back in support of serving more young people in need. I appreciate your time and consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "R".

Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress