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April 27, 2017

The Honorable Donald Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20050

Dear President Trump,

I am writing today to provide additional information regarding the necessary federal support to our nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). I recognize your fiscal year 2018 budget blueprint purports to protect support for HBCUs. However, the massive spending cuts proposed under the same document will have a dramatic impact on HBCUs across the country. Additionally, in our meeting, your staff raised concerns about the effectiveness of the federal TRIO programs. As a proud graduate of Morehouse College and Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, I am compelled to highlight the discrepancy between your stated goal to uplift HBCUs and your proposed spending priorities.

Every year, the federal TRIO programs help hundreds of thousands of students from low-income backgrounds to become the first members of their families to earn college degrees. To address the concerns raised by your staff, I have enclosed a report by the Council for Opportunity in Education highlighting the impact of TRIO programs on college enrollment, retention, and graduation rates for low-income, first-generation students. The analysis shows consistent improvements in college enrollment and degree attainment rates across TRIO program participants compared to their peers.

As you may know, one in five African-American college graduates earned their degrees at an HBCU. Half of all African-American teachers and 40 percent of all Black health professionals graduate from HBCUs as well. These institutions have nurtured generations of leaders in the fields of science, arts and letters, law, and civil rights. They also rely heavily on federal assistance compared to traditional schools. For example, 71 percent of students who attend four-year HBCUs depend on federal Pell Grants for their education, a substantially greater share than the 41 percent of students at all four-year, nonprofit colleges and universities.

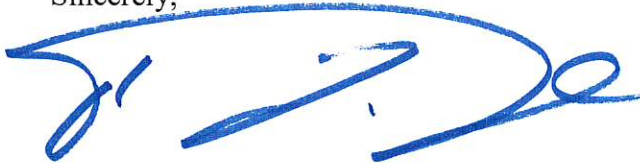


To ensure the long-term stability of these national treasures, HBCUs require robust funding across a host of federal programs, including, but not limited to:

- HBCU Undergraduate Program (Title III, Part B, Sec. 323),
- HBCU Capital Financing Program (Title III, Part D),
- HBCU Graduate Program (Title III, Part B, Sec. 326),
- Predominantly Black Institutions (Title III, Part A, Sec. 318),
- Master's Degree Programs at HBCUs and PBIs (Title VII, Secs. 723 and 724),
- Federal Pell Grant Program,
- TRIO, GEAR UP, and Upward Bound,
- Department of Interior HBCU Historic Preservation Program,
- 1890 Research, Education, Extension, and Facility Programs,
- Department of Defense HBCU/Minority Institutions Program, and
- National Science Foundation "Broadening Participation" programs.

For over a hundred years, HBCUs have served as an engine of social mobility for millions of students. The communities that we represent rely on these institutions to educate our students, uplift our neighborhoods, and revitalize our local economies. I urge you to fully support HBCUs so that they can continue delivering educational experiences that prepare the next generation of leaders with the skills needed to strengthen our economy and improve the well-being of our great nation.

Sincerely,



Cedric L. Richmond
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus

Enclosure