



November 22, 2019

Pass S. 1279, the FUTURE Act and Restore Funding to Serve Students of Color and Native Students

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (The Leadership Conference), a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, and the 27 undersigned organizations, **we write to strongly urge you to immediately pass S.1279, the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act to ensure Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions (ANNHIs), Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), and Native American-Serving Nontribal Institution (NASNTIs) have the resources they need to support their students.**

As a civil rights community, we are incredibly concerned about the future of education in our country, especially access to high quality higher education for communities of color and Native communities. HBCUs and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) are the collective name for HSIs, TCUs, ANNHIs, PBIs, AANAPISIs, and NASNTIs) all play a critical role in postsecondary success for marginalized students. As institutions, they face many barriers similar to those faced by the students themselves: less funding than institutions with a higher share of White and wealthier students and greater barriers for student completion. Investing in and supporting HBCUs and MSIs will overwhelmingly benefit marginalized students and is critical to an equitable system of higher education. This bipartisan bill extends crucial mandatory funding for education in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) until September 30, 2021, allowing HBCUs and MSIs to continue to operate and provide the quality of education their students deserve.

Although the House passed this bill more than two months ago by voice vote, funding expired on September 30, providing a loss of \$255 million. To avoid significant long-term consequences for institutions – and students – it is vital that the Senate act swiftly to reinstate this funding. Support for HBCUs and MSIs should not be used as leverage for other legislative initiatives, or to upend consideration of a comprehensive reauthorization of the Higher Education Act that drives towards equity and protects students' civil rights. Lapsed funding for HBCUs and MSIs is an urgent problem and requires an immediate solution.

Without these funds institutions that mainly educate traditionally underrepresented students will not be able to properly plan for the upcoming academic year leaving the over 300,000 students enrolled at an HBCU or MSI without sufficient academic resources to become the

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next generation of scientists, teachers, and engineers. Students are counting on you and your leadership to immediately pass the FUTURE Act, and ensure that they have the opportunity to fulfill their potential. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact CJ Powell, Higher Education Program Analyst at The Leadership Conference, at powell@civilrights.org or 202-263-2880.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Federation of Teachers
Augustus F. Hawkins Foundation
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for Responsible Lending
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
Human Rights Campaign
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
NAACP
NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc.
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients)
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
National Education Association
National Indian Education Association
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
The Education Trust
The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS)
UnidosUS
Union for Reform Judaism