

September 24, 2019

Senator Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Senator Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), other Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), and the higher education community at large, we write to ask that you and the members you lead bring to the floor and vote in favor of the House-passed H.R. 2486, the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act, as soon as possible.

This bicameral, bipartisan bill was introduced by Representative Alma Adams (D-NC) and Representative Mark Walker (R-NC), with a companion bill offered in the Senate by Senator Tim Scott (R-SC) and Senator Doug Jones (D-AL), to extend vital mandatory funding for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education, student completion and infrastructure programs benefiting HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs, and other MSIs in Title III, Part F of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) before it expires on September 30, 2019.

This legislation recently passed the House of Representatives under suspension and could be quickly enacted following Senate passage. We share the concerns of some senators that the FUTURE Act provides only a temporary extension, and we agree that a permanent extension is needed. The two-year window provided by passage of the FUTURE Act would secure this critical funding stream in the short-term, allowing additional time for Congress to provide a permanent solution, either as a stand-alone measure or as part of the reauthorization of the HEA.

Meeting the September 30 deadline is of vital importance to institutions. The funding provided in Title III, Part F allows institutions to build and maintain capacity in vital areas they would otherwise lack the resources for. It would be irresponsible for a college president to budget for, allocate resources toward, and depend upon federal funding when a clear, statutory deadline has expired without congressional action. As a result, institutions will be forced to begin ending, or severely altering, the programs and efforts these funds support.

This will lead to significant, negative outcomes. According to a recent report, there are more than “20 million young people of color in the United States whose representations in STEM

education pathways and in the STEM workforce [fall] . . . far below their proportions of the general population.”¹ In addition, “the educational outcomes and STEM readiness of students of color will have direct implications on America’s economic growth, national security, and global prosperity.”²

Another report released by the White House’s National Science and Technology Council stated that the “national benefits of a strong STEM foundation cannot be fully realized until all members of society have equitable access to STEM education and [until] there is much broader participation by those historically underserved and underrepresented in STEM fields...”³ The report goes on to highlight the importance of diversity in the workplace leading to more engaged, innovative, and higher-performing organizations.

It is clear that diversifying our STEM workforce should be a priority for our country and would pay immediate dividends to our economy. The FUTURE Act helps avoid a \$2.55 billion-dollar cliff in funding over 10 years for HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs, and other MSIs by extending mandatory funding until Fiscal Year 2021. This bill is revenue neutral, fully offset and allows these important institutions to continue the valuable work of offering quality STEM programs.

We thank you for your consideration of this request and look forward to working with you to enact this legislation before the September 30 deadline.

Sincerely,



Ted Mitchell
President

On behalf of:

Achieving the Dream, Inc.
ACPA-College Student Educators International
ACT, Inc.

¹ Espinosa, L.L., McGuire, K., & Jackson, L.M. (2019). Minority serving institutions: America’s underutilized resource for strengthening the STEM workforce. Retrieved from The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Website:
<https://www.nap.edu/download/25257>

² Ibid.

³ National Science & Technology Council. (2018). Charting a course for success: America’s strategy for stem education. Retrieved from White House Website:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/STEM-Education-Strategic-Plan-2018.pdf>

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
American Dental Education Association
American Indian Higher Education Consortium
APPA, Leadership in Educational Facilities
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Association of American Universities
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
College and University Professional Association for Human Resources
Common App
Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area
Council for Advancement and Support of Education
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Council for Opportunity in Education
Council of Graduate Schools
Council of Independent Colleges
Council on Social Work Education
EDUCAUSE
ETS
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
NAFSA: Association of International Educators
NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Colleges and Employers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of System Heads
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships
Thurgood Marshall College Fund
UNCF
UPCEA