

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 21, 2026

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Baldwin:

We write to express our strong and continued support for federal programs that promote Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs)—including, but not limited to, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribally-Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), and Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions (ANNHSIs)—through the Higher Education Act (HEA) and Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins). We appreciate your continued commitment to these programs, as demonstrated by the recently-passed FY26 LHHS Appropriations bill.

As you begin to evaluate federal spending priorities for FY27, we encourage you to provide robust funding for these programs—which improve college access and success for working and middle class students who attend these institutions—in the coming year.

- **Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities Program (HEA Title III, Part B), Endowment Challenge Grants (HEA Title III, Part C), Master’s Degree Programs at HBCUs (HEA Title VII, Part A), HBCU Capital Financing Program, and FEMA Non-Profit Security Grant Program set-aside for HBCUs:** Despite persistent underinvestment at HBCUs, these institutions have continued to play a vital role in providing affordable and accessible higher education for minority students who are underrepresented. In 2021, HBCUs awarded 13 percent of all bachelor’s degrees earned by Black students – including nearly one quarter of all bachelor’s degrees earned in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) – as well as 5 percent of all master’s degrees. The continued success and safety of HBCUs warrants a stronger federal investment in these institutions.
- **Strengthening Predominantly Black Institutions Program (HEA Title III, Parts A and F) and Master’s Degree Programs at PBIs (HEA Title VII, Part A):** PBIs serve largely

low-income, often first-generation college students. They play a critical role in providing access to increasingly diverse student bodies. In previous years, the completion rates of students enrolled in four-year PBIs have been higher than the national graduation rate. With fewer educational resources compared to other institutions, PBIs play a critical role in providing access to education.

- **Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program (HEA Title V, Part A), Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans Program (HEA Title V, Part B), and Hispanic-Serving Institutions STEM Programs (HEA Title III, Part F) and HSI Capital Financing:** HSIs are the fastest-growing cohort of colleges and universities across the nation. In the fall of 2023, a total of 615 institutions were educating and serving 5.6 million college students from diverse backgrounds, including 3.7 million Hispanic students in higher education. HSIs play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the nation, educating 33 percent of the U.S. higher education population. With every passing year, their influence deepens as they not only expand in number and enrollment but also solidify their role in cultivating a highly skilled, future-ready workforce. According to 2024 Social Mobility Index (SMI) developed by CollegeNET, Inc., 8 of the top 10 institutions with the highest upward mobility rates—out of thousands of colleges and universities nationwide—were HSIs. This compelling evidence highlights the powerful socioeconomic impact HSIs have on underserved students, transforming their futures and driving upward mobility. However, despite educating millions of students, these programs have remained underresourced and underfunded as reported in the 2024 HSI GAO report. The continued success of HSIs warrants a federal investment that is commensurate to the number of institutions or the number of students that are educated at these institutions.
- **Strengthening Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Program (HEA Title III, Parts A and F) and Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Career and Technical Institutions Program (Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act):** TCUs are tribally and federally chartered institutions of higher education that offer hundreds of programs to students. Collectively, these institutions enroll roughly 17,200 students, with higher shares of low-income students, higher shares of part-time students, and slightly higher shares of first-generation college students. They also tend to be located in areas that would otherwise be characterized as education deserts, given the limited access to nearby colleges and universities. TCUs provide high-risk students with an opportunity to continue their education, yet they are chronically underfunded. It should be a priority to ensure that TCUs receive the necessary resources to continue their programs.
- **Strengthening Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions Program (HEA Title III, Parts A and F):** NASNTIs are state institutions with limited financial resources that report significant numbers of Native American students. Competitive grants for these institutions support a variety of targeted strategies to build capacity for improving student success.

- Strengthening Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions Program (HEA Title III, Parts A and F):** The “model minority” myth that all Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander (AANAPI) students perform well, academically and professionally, masks disparities in college access and success for certain AANAPI subgroups. Disparities for Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Samoan students receiving bachelor’s degrees highlight these inequities. Among Asian Americans, the highest proportion of those with the lowest levels of educational attainment include Bhutanese, Burmese, Mien, and Cambodian. Among Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, the highest proportion of those with the lowest levels of educational attainment include Marshallese. AANAPISIs enroll over 40 percent of all AA and NHPI undergraduates across the nation, each playing a critical role in their access to opportunity and higher education. AANAPISIs award nearly half of all associate and bachelor’s degrees earned by AA and NHPI students. Programs to support AANAPISIs can help to address existing disparities for first-generation, low-income, and immigrant students by ensuring targeted academic, financial, and social support designed to improve retention, graduation, and workforce success.
- Strengthening Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions Program (HEA Title III, Parts A and F):** ANNHSIs serve significant populations of Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian (ANNH) students, and generally have fewer educational resources compared to other institutions. In many instances, ANNHSIs are the only postsecondary institutions available to geographically-isolated and historically underserved populations. Funding for these programs support institutions that serve nearly 60,000 students.
- Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program (HEA Title III, Part E):** MSEIP helps institutions with significant minority enrollments to improve the pathway to STEM careers for underrepresented minorities. Grants focus on reducing barriers throughout the educational pipeline.
- First in the World, with set-asides for MSIs (HEA Title VII, Part B):** The First in the World program provides grants to support the implementation and evaluation of evidence-based strategies to dramatically improve high-need students’ college completion. The program includes set-asides for HBCUs and MSIs.
- Innovation for Completion Fund:** This proposal supports grants to HBCUs and MSIs to provide research-based strategies to significantly improve minority student enrollment and completion.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

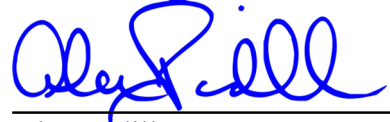
Sincerely,



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



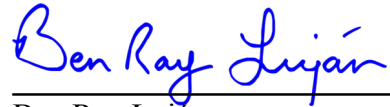
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



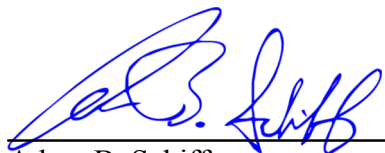
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
U.S. Senator



Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



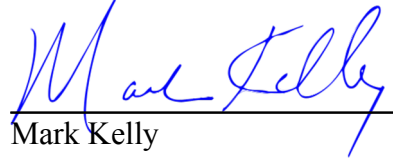
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



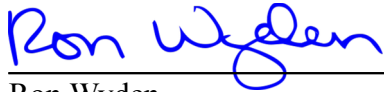
Tina Smith
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



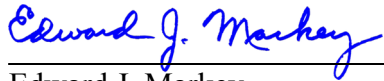
Mark Kelly
United States Senator



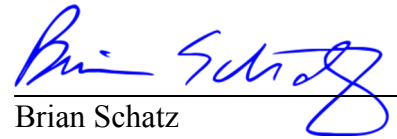
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



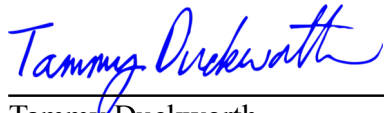
Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator