

I thank you.

FUTURE ACT

Mr. President, earlier today on this Senate floor, our colleague, the junior Senator from Alabama, Mr. JONES, asked unanimous consent for the immediate passage of the FUTURE Act.

The FUTURE Act is an important bill that is essential to the success of minority-serving colleges and universities across the country, including historically Black colleges and universities.

The House bill passed within the last couple weeks. The bill number is H.R. 2486, and it is at the Senate desk, meaning we could take it up and pass it at any moment if the leader would simply allow us to vote on that measure. What it does is it extends an existing mandatory funding program that provides essential resources to these underresourced schools.

We, as the Congress, the Senate and House, Republicans and Democrats, recognize on a bipartisan basis the value of these institutions of higher learning and the importance of this mandatory funding because we enacted this program a number of years ago on a bipartisan basis. The goal was to make sure that we provided additional resources for academic pursuits, to improve management, and to ensure that they had the resources for high-demand areas of study in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math—the STEM disciplines.

In my State of Maryland, we have four terrific HBCUs: Morgan State, Bowie State, Coppin State, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. We also have a number of other schools with a high number of students receiving need-based aid, like Allegany College in Western Maryland and the College of Southern Maryland. All of these colleges and universities need the resources that are provided through the FUTURE Act.

It not only has a bipartisan heritage, but right now in the Senate, it has a bipartisan cosponsorship. In fact, Senator SCOTT is the lead Republican on this bill. It passed the House of Representatives unanimously on a voice vote.

The reason I am on the floor now and the reason the Senator from Alabama, Senator JONES, asked for unanimous consent to take this up and vote on it earlier today is because the current mandatory program expires on Monday. It expires at the end of this month. There is no reason for delaying action. It is possible that we can buy ourselves a little bit more time with respect to the funding, but there is no reason that we should put this important program at risk.

I have a number of letters. In fact, I have 43 letters from 34 schools and advocacy organizations supporting this bill. I ask unanimous consent to have some of them printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION,

September 1, 2019.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.
Hon. CHUCK SCHUMER,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR LEADER MCCONNELL AND LEADER SCHUMER: In less than two weeks, congressional authority and vitally needed funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) Hispanic-serving Institutions (HSIs), Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander-serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), will end, unless Congress acts by September 30, 2019, to extend the authority and funding. Yesterday, the United States House of Representatives moved the Nation toward extending the funding for another two years, when it voted with bipartisan support, to pass the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act, a bipartisan measure to preserve funding for the referenced quintessential American equal educational opportunity institutions.

I am writing as President & CEO of the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO). I am writing to respectfully request and urge that you schedule for a vote the Senate companion of the House-passed FUTURE Act, introduced by Senators Tim Scott (SC) and Doug Jones (AL), and that you support this measure that has made critical investments in HBCUs and MSIs, enabling them to graduate more excellent and diverse students, disproportionate low-income, first generation and underrepresented minority students, in growth and high need disciplines. With your support the Senate FUTURE Act will pass.

The FUTURE Act will be wholly paid for. It preserves and extends vital investments in institutions that collectively enroll more than 4.8 million undergraduate students in the U.S.—one-quarter of all students—and represent over 800 richly diverse American universities: 106 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), 50 Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs); 523 Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), 37 Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and over 200 Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), including Kentucky State University, and CUNY Medgar Evers College, CUNY York College, CUNY LaGuardia, CUNY New York City College of Technology, Metropolitan College of New York, and Long Island University-Brooklyn Campus.

As you know, HBCUs, PBIs, HSIs, TCUs, and AANAPISIs are an essential part of America's higher education system. For the past decade, Title III, Part F has played a vital role in strengthening their capacity and increasing credentialing and degree attainment, including in important STEM fields. If this critical funding stream is allowed to expire on September 30, 2019, millions of students will be left behind, in the margins of our nation, without the opportunity to earn a college degree or credential. Please do not let this happen. Title III, Part F is the lifeblood for these institutions. The most certain way, the most effective and efficient way of extending the only mandatory congressional funding for HBCUs and MSIs, is to vote for the Senate companion of the House-passed FUTURE Act, introduced by Senators Scott (SC) and Jones (AL). Please

lead the United States Senate in making this happen.

Sincerely,

LEZLI BASKERVILLE,
President & CEO.

UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND, INC.,
September 19, 2019.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. CHARLES E. SCHUMER,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. LAMAR ALEXANDER,
Chairman, Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee,
Washington, DC.

Hon. PATTY MURRAY,
Ranking Member, Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL, MINORITY LEADER SCHUMER, CHAIRMAN ALEXANDER, AND RANKING MEMBER MURRAY: UNCF (the United Negro College Fund, Inc.) submits this letter urging you to cosponsor, support, and pass the House-passed H.R. 2486, the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act. This bipartisan, bicameral bill passed the House Floor on September 17th by voice vote and has now been sent to the Senate for consideration.

UNCF is a non-profit organization with a mission to build a robust and nationally recognized pipeline of underrepresented students who, because of UNCF support, become highly-qualified college graduates and to ensure that our network of 37-member, private Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) is a respected model of best practice in moving students to and through college.

The 101 HBCUs that exist today are valuable institutions with a large economic footprint. Despite only representing 3 percent of all two-and four-year non-profit colleges and universities, HBCUs (1) enroll 10 percent of all African American undergraduates; (2) produce 17 percent of all African American college graduates with bachelor's degrees; and (3) graduate 21 percent of all African Americans with bachelor's degrees in STEM fields. Moreover, these institutions have a strong economic impact, especially on the regions in which they are located, by creating 134,090 jobs, producing \$10.1 billion in terms of gross regional product, and having a total annual economic impact of \$14.8 billion.

Despite the large economic impact of these institutions, they continue to be underresourced and have endowments that lag behind those of non-HBCUs by at least 70 percent. Unfortunately, this is common for HBCUs and Congress has recognized this and sought out ways to find parity between HBCUs and non-HBCUs. One strategic way in attempting to help HBCUs receive adequate resources was initially through the College Cost and Reduction Act of 2007. This bill allowed for HBCUs, Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and other Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) to receive \$255 million annually in mandatory funds for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 and FY 2009. These mandatory funds were directed in the Higher Education Act of 1965 to be used solely for science, technology, education, and mathematics (STEM) education, among other uses largely centered around STEM. Instead of allowing this funding stream to expire, Congress continued to recognize the need of these institutions to offer quality STEM programs on their campuses and continued this funding stream in the Student Aid Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA) of 2009. SAFRA extended funding

for these institutions from FY 2009 to FY 2019 at \$255 million annually and was included in the Health Care Reconciliation Act of 2010 that ultimately passed both the House and Senate to become law. Every vote taken on the mandatory funding stream for these institutions has been bipartisan, and it is our desire to have the same outcome for H.R. 2486.

It is imperative that the Senate pass the FUTURE Act because funding for HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs, and other MSIs expires September 30, 2019. While we support a permanent extension of mandatory funding, H.R. 2486, due to its passage in the House of Representatives, is the surest way for these institutions to maintain funding for FY 2020 and FY 2021. We strongly believe that passing this bill now will address the immediate funding needs of our institutions and allow Congress to continue to work towards a permanent extension of this funding moving forward.

Should you have any additional questions regarding this letter, please feel free to reach out to Emmanuel Guillory, Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL L. LOMAX, PH.D.
President and CEO.

—
TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY,
September 25, 2019.

Hon. LAMAR ALEXANDER,
Chairman Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, Member, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR ALEXANDER: I am writing to you in my official capacity as President of Tennessee State University, and as a member of the Board of Directors of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF). I ask you to join in the effort calling for unanimous consent to vote to pass the Scott-Jones FUTURE Act, the Senate companion bill to the FUTURE Act that passed the House last week by unanimous consent.

I understand and appreciate the noteworthy components to the bill you are proposing, however my request is for you to consider the timing aspect which presents a challenge that threatens the Title III F provision in the Higher Education Act that will end on September 30th unless it is extended. Again, I am appreciative of the various provisions that you are proposing that will have a positive effect on HBCUs. In fact, I am personally excited that you are advancing HEA reauthorization as a priority, as well as broadening Pell eligibility. Hopefully, that proposal will be debated shortly after the immediate future of HBCUs and MSIs are secured.

My primary issue at this point is the timing of your legislation which could cause an inordinate delay that would affect Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). I am quite concerned that with only a few days remaining before Title III F ends, the only way we can ensure passage of this FUTURE Act is by a unanimous consent by the Senate.

Based on your long, illustrious and rich record of service to our state as Governor of the State of Tennessee, and to the country as Secretary of the United States Department of Education, I am sure you would agree that it is a priority to continue the Title III F funding for HBCUs, thereby providing much needed assistance to students around the

country. Many of this population are low-income, first-generation college students, all with a strong desire to be successful in college. If Title III F sunsets on September 30, 2019, it will cause irreparable harm to the very students you represent in our great State of Tennessee. I urge you to support the FUTURE Act today and engage in further discussions on other aspects of the legislation in the near future.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

DR. GLENDA GLOVER, JD, CPA
President.

—
AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER
EDUCATION
CONSORTIUM,
September 19, 2019.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.
Hon. CHUCK SCHUMER,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.
Hon. LAMAR ALEXANDER,
Chairman, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
Washington, DC.
Hon. PATTY MURRAY,
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL, MINORITY LEADER SCHUMER, CHAIRMAN ALEXANDER, AND RANKING MEMBER MURRAY: On behalf of the nation's 37 Tribal Colleges and Universities, which are the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), we respectfully request that you to support swift Senate passage of the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act, H.R. 2486, as passed by the House with strong bipartisan support, while working to secure a permanent extension of Title III Part F of the Higher Education Act 1965.

Since FY2010, the Strengthening Institutions—Tribal Colleges and Universities program (HEA Title III Part F) has provided \$30 million per year to help TCUs address the higher education needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students. TCUs use this funding for vitally needed student support services, faculty development, curriculum and program development to strengthen tribal nations, library services, facility modernization and construction and other important education activities. Without these funds, TCUs will be forced to reduce services, jeopardizing student completion and success, and some of our smaller institutions may face closure.

Tribal Colleges and Universities truly are developing institutions—the oldest TCU recently reached its 50th year; we are located in some of the most rural, remote, and economically challenged regions of the country; we are severely under-resourced; and yet, we are committed to affordable, high quality, place-based and culturally grounded higher education. Our ability to achieve our collective vision—strong sovereign Tribal nations through excellence in Tribal higher education—would be impossible without the Title III Part F program.

We have always supported and worked for permanent reauthorization of the Title III Part F program for Tribal Colleges and Universities, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions,

and other minority serving institutions. We are not wavering from this critical goal. However, the House-passed FUTURE Act, H.R. 2486, is the best path forward at this time. Indeed, the House-passed FUTURE Act is the only tangible strategy before us, and time is running out.

Thank you for your attention to this request and for your support of our institutions and the students we serve.

Sincerely,

CARRIE L. BILLY,
President & CEO.

DAVID E. YARLOTT, Jr.,
Chair, AIHEC Board of Directors.

—
THURGOOD MARSHALL COLLEGE FUND,
September 18, 2019.

RE: Title III Part-F Funding to HBCUs and MSIs

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate.
Hon. CHUCK SCHUMER,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate.
Hon. LAMAR ALEXANDER,
Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education Labor and Pensions.

Hon. PATTY MURRAY,
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education Labor and Pensions.

DEAR SENATORS:

The Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) is incredibly pleased and grateful that the Title III, Part F funding that is currently slated to expire on September 30th has garnered considerable interest from and corresponding action this week in Congress. As you may be aware, his critical stream of funding helps eligible colleges and universities enhance their fiscal stability, improve their institutional management, and strengthen their academic programming, including, in particular, programming focused on high-demand careers, like careers in STEM fields.

As you may know, on Tuesday, September 17th, the House of Representatives passed the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act by voice vote. If passed by both houses of Congress and signed into law by President Trump, the FUTURE Act will renew Title III, Part F (a/k/a SAFRA) funding for an additional two years, and thereby preserving critical funds upon which our HBCUs and other MSIs rely to improve the lives of our students.

TMCF strongly encourages the Senate to take-up the FUTURE Act immediately and pass the bill before the opportunity slips away. While we appreciate the prospects of a longer-term or “permanent” solution to Title III, Part F, we are skeptical that such a proposal would receive the requisite approval by Congress before September 30th. Therefore, it is imperative that the Senate to act with all deliberate speed on the bi-partisan and bi-cameral FUTURE Act. Following the Senate’s passage of FUTURE Act, TMCF is willing to work with leaders on both sides of the aisle to develop a longer-term solution for Title III, Part F and for other HEA-related issues.

We greatly appreciate your attention to this matter, and thank you for your historic and, we anticipate, continued commitment to our Nation’s HBCUs, other MSIs and our students.

Sincerely,

DR. HARRY L. WILLIAMS,
President & CEO.

HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES,
September 19, 2019.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate.
Hon. LAMAR ALEXANDER,
Chairman, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.
Hon. CHARLES SCHUMER,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate.
Hon. PATTY MURRAY,
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

DEAR LEADER MCCONNELL, LEADER SCHUMER, CHAIRMAN ALEXANDER, AND RANKING MEMBER MURRAY: In just 10 days, on September 30, 2019, Title III, Part F of the Higher Education Act of 1965 will expire unless the Senate acts before then to extend it. I strongly urge you and your Senate colleagues to act swiftly in passing the FUTURE Act (H.R. 2486), which was passed by the House two days ago, to ensure that critical funding is uninterrupted for the more than 4.5 million undergraduate students enrolled at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) alone. In addition, hundreds of thousands of students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and other Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) would be impacted.

The House-passed FUTURE Act represents the best path to ensure the above institutions don't lose critical funding on September 30, 2019.

HSIs, HBCUs, TCUs, and other MSIs are an essential part of America's higher education system and workforce development. For the past decade, Title III, Part F has played a vital role in strengthening the STEM pipeline at these institutions and increasing their capacity for credentialing and degree attainment.

The mandatory funding for Title III, Part F was initially included in the 2008 College Cost Reduction and Access Act for two years and was extended until FY 2019 in the Health Care Education and Reconciliation Act of 2010. Title III, Part F of the legislation has always had bipartisan and bicameral support because of its important role in increasing student persistence and graduation rates, particularly in STEM fields, at HSIs, HBCUs, TCUs, and other MSIs. Thus, it is imperative that Congress extends Title III, Part F via the FUTURE Act since it is a lifeline for these institutions.

HSIs alone account for 15 percent of all non-profit colleges and universities, and yet enroll 66 percent of all Hispanic students and nearly one-fourth of all U.S. students. Despite having access to fewer resources compared to other institutions, HSIs impressively produce 40 percent of the STEM bachelor's degrees earned by Latino students. Their future is in the balance.

As our nation becomes increasingly diverse and the number of HSIs continues to grow, Title III, Part F funding is more essential than ever to ensure that we can prepare today's students for tomorrow's jobs and reduce our nation's dependence on foreign talent.

With time running out, we appeal to you to use the power and influence of your leadership positions to pass the House-passed FUTURE Act before September 30, 2019. We look forward to continuing our shared efforts to find a permanent extension of Title III, Part F.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact Alicia Diaz, HACU's Interim Chief Advocacy Officer.

We thank you in advance for your time and look forward to a timely passage of the FUTURE Act.

Sincerely,

ANTONIO R. FLORES,
President & CEO.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I am going to read from just two of those letters that expressed the urgency of Senate action on this.

This is a letter from the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, from the president and CEO, stating that the Thurgood Marshall College Fund "strongly encourages the Senate to take-up the FUTURE Act immediately and pass the bill before the opportunity slips away. While we appreciate the prospects of a longer-term or 'permanent' solution to Title III, Part F, we are skeptical that such a proposal would receive the requisite approval by Congress before September 30th."

I think we can understand their skepticism given the fact that the 30th is Monday and the Senate is going to be out this afternoon.

They go on to say:

Therefore, it is imperative that the Senate act with all deliberate speed on the bi-partisan, bi-cameral FUTURE Act.

Mr. President, I have another letter from the UNCF, which is another organization dedicated to supporting these important institutions.

Quoting from the letter from their president and CEO:

It is imperative that the Senate pass the FUTURE Act because funding for HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs, and other [minority-serving institutions] expires September 30, 2019. While we support a permanent extension of mandatory funding, H.R. 2846, due to its passage in the House of Representatives, is the surest way for these institutions to maintain funding for FY 2020 and FY 2021. We strongly believe that passing this bill now will address the immediate funding needs of our institutions.

This is a bill that has broad support. This is a bill where—the program expires on Monday, just a few days from now. There is really no excuse for not taking this up and voting on it now. I hope, since that is obviously not going to happen—my colleague tried to get unanimous consent earlier today to take up and vote on this bill—I hope we will move with all deliberate speed as soon as the Senate reconvenes so that we can get this important work done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

THE WORKING CLASS IN AMERICA

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, earlier this week, the Missouri Department of Health issued a new report that shows that life expectancy actually declined in the State of Missouri last year. Worse than that, the report shows that life expectancy has been falling in my State for almost a decade. Death rates for Missourians between 15 and 34 years old rose by almost 30 percent between 2012 and 2018. The death rate for Missourians who are between 25 and 34 is at its highest levels since the 1950s. We know what is causing it. It is an epidemic of drug overdoses and suicides, along with a spike in crime, in our cities.

Here are the facts. Opioid-related deaths in Missouri have more than doubled in the last decade. The number of suicides is up by over 50 percent, and there is no end in sight. And it is not just Missouri. New data shows that deaths from suicides and drug overdoses are exploding nationwide. Suicides in this country haven't been so common since 1938. Alcohol-related deaths haven't been so high since the 1910s. Meanwhile, the surge in deaths from drug overdoses in this country is completely unprecedented.

These numbers are tragic, but they are more than that—they are the signs of a crisis. We are witnessing the slow-motion collapse of the working class in America.

All Americans suffer from the depths of despair, but we know from the evidence that it is working people and working families who are hit the hardest. So now the working middle of this Nation is facing a struggle to survive. You don't have to look far to see it.

I have seen it in the small towns of my State, in the places where TV cameras never go, where town squares sit half empty, where businesses stand shuttered, where you can buy fentanyl with the snap of a finger on any street corner.

I have seen it in country places where meth is so common, they tell me that dealers hang bags of drugs from tree branches for their buyers to retrieve—a literal landscape of despair and addiction.

I have seen it in the faces of young farmers who put a crop in and pray for rain and pray for Sun and pray for fair prices and then wonder if generations of family farming are going to end with them.

I have seen it from young mothers raising kids alone, working a job and trying to go to school at night, trying to shield their children from drugs and from the pathologies online.

I have heard it in the words of young men who graduated high school only to find no jobs, no place to learn a trade, and no hope for anything that is better.

This is the struggle of working life today. In my State, it is a struggle shared by White and Black alike, by everybody of every race, because of the breakdown of family and neighborhood, the loss of good work, and the epidemic of addictive drugs, which don't know racial boundaries.

This is a struggle we are in together. It is a struggle that brings us together. It is a struggle for the things we love together—for home, family, and country—and the future of this country will be defined by how we meet this challenge.

You can see all of this if you will look. The problem is this town will not look. This town is obsessed with partisan theatrics. This town is obsessed with money and influence and status. This town wants to keep its own good