

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

times going. The political elite here live in a world where the struggle of working Americans is just a human interest story that you read about right along with the gossip page.

But it is time for this town to take some responsibility. It is time for the governing class to admit that the policies it has pursued for decades on trade, on immigration, and on finance have helped to drive working people to this crisis. And it is time to acknowledge that a crisis for working America is a crisis for all of America. It is not enough for wealthy people in Silicon Valley to do well. By the way, those people don't need any more advocates in this city. They have lots of them already. It is working people who need advocates here, and it is working families who need a voice.

You know, working folks don't ask for much. They work hard. They love their families, they love God, they love the place where they live, and they want the opportunity to build a home there and a way of life that is prosperous and that is secure and that is meaningful and that they can pass on to their children. That is not too much to ask. In the America of the 21st century, that is not too much to expect. It is not too much to stand for and to fight for because it is the working people of this country who built this Nation. They are the ones who keep it going now, and they are the ones where this country's strength is found. It is the working people of this country—their future and their families—who are going to define the future of our country.

I would just say that this is what we should be debating. This challenge is what we should be confronting. This crisis is what we should be looking to and addressing because this is what is going to define our time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. JONES. Mr. President, I have to admit that I haven't had a heck of a lot of sleep the last few nights, and I don't think anyone has. If anyone has rested well the last few nights, it is because they are either not paying attention or they are here for the wrong reason.

We are in some troubled times. Events of the past 2 weeks have been nothing short of stunning. They have been stunning in the speed in which they have unfolded. They have been stunning and disturbing in the allegations that have been made regarding the conduct of the President of the United States. These are allegations that go to the heart of national security and allegations that go to the heart of whether or not the President is upholding his oath to the Constitution of the United States or abusing the power of the Presidency.

We have to remember in this body, and we have to remind our colleagues, we have to remind the media, and we have to remind the public that we are

just now beginning this process. The facts have not come out. We are just now beginning to see facts and determining what happened over the course of this past summer—where things were, what happened, what was said, and who said it. We have to determine the allegations and whether or not they have merit based on the facts that come out, not just reports in the media or even the allegations in a complaint. I am a lawyer. Allegations in a complaint are just simply allegations made, but they have to be proven.

The reason I rise today is that already we are seeing this becoming political. People are going to their political corners. The partisan tribalism is taking over already, and that is unfortunate. It is a sad commentary when a process that is so rooted in the Constitution of the United States—something so fundamental to our democracy—is almost immediately cast in political terms. My colleague and friend, Senator SASSE from Nebraska, used the term “partisan tribalism” in today's world that is “insta-certain.” No matter what you see, no matter what you read, it doesn't matter because you are going to take a side, and when we take sides, the American public immediately take sides and no one listens to the facts.

We are called as Senators, we are called as Members of the House, and we are called as Members of this body to a much higher duty than that—a much higher duty. Our duty is to carefully analyze and review the facts—facts, not mere allegations; facts, not reports or leaks; facts, not what some political talking head on the television says their opinion might be. Our duty is so much higher than that.

We have seen already some of what appear to be very disturbing facts. We have seen a summary of a telephone call between the President of the United States and the President of Ukraine. Ukraine is a country dependent on countries like the United States. The balance of power between the United States and Ukraine is not balanced at all. We have so much more power, and in the summary of that call, the President of the United States noted that to the President of Ukraine. He said, essentially: You are dependent on us. No one else helps you, but you can count on the United States of America. And, by the way, I need a favor. I need you to do me a personal political favor.

In that conversation, he talked about not only having his personal lawyer but also utilizing the Attorney General of the United States to help benefit them politically. Those are initially the facts, and they are very disturbing. For anyone to say that they are not is shirking their responsibility to their constituents, to the public, to the Constitution, and to the very oath that we took when we came into this body.

But again, it is but one piece of a puzzle. We have now also seen the contents of the so-called whistleblower

complaint. “Whistleblower” is a term of art. A whistleblower is just simply somebody who has come forward, but they are given the name whistleblower because they are given legal protections. These people who come forward are concerned citizens of the United States. It is a concerned citizen of the United States who saw something happening that disturbed him so much that he felt compelled to bring it to someone's attention. They are documented fairly well, but again, these facts have not come out. They are just statements in an allegation in a complaint that have to be determined.

I have been asked over and over by the media in the last 2 days: Do you support the House doing this? Do you support impeachment? Do you support this or that?

My comment is always the same: I want to know the facts. It doesn't matter to me what the House of Representatives, in their prerogative, calls their processes. I want to know the facts. The American people deserve to know the facts. This body deserves to know the facts, whether or not anything comes over from the House of Representatives. We deserve to know whether or not the President is abusing his office. We deserve to know whether or not he is placing our national security at risk because, remember, Ukraine is under threat from Russia every day. Every day they are looking over their shoulder. Every day they are looking over their shoulder. That puts us at risk, as well. We have to make sure that we are deliberate, that we move forward with a process that is deliberate. We owe it to the American people to be deliberate, to be somber, to be making sure that we know the facts before we make our judgments.

It doesn't matter what side of the aisle you are on. This is not a Republican process. This is not a Democratic process. And for God's sake, it is not a socialist agenda. That is about the dumbest thing that I have heard people say over the last two days. Good Lord, we are talking about a process that is rooted in the Constitution of the United States. It is rooted in the Constitution of the United States for a purpose—part of the checks and balances that seem to be going out the window these days in our society and in our government and here in Washington, DC. This is an American agenda to make sure that we know the facts and that we understand those facts so people who are around here watching this today know and can be secure in the fact that their Congress is doing their job, that the President is doing his job, that the courts are doing their job.

This is not the time to circle the wagons around the President, but, likewise, it is not the time to make a judgment already that this President should be removed from office or even for articles of impeachment voted on by the House. This is not the time to do that. We are beginning a process