

and at the same time protect the interests of plan participants and the taxpayers who would otherwise be required to bail out these multiemployer plans.

Our reform proposal also improves the so-called zone rules. Plans will be required to look further into the future when estimating their financial status, and will have to institute a form of stress testing to check whether a plan can remain financially sustainable through potential economic and demographic stresses. Depending on its health, plans will have to bolster the steps they take when signs of financial hardship arise. That is a pretty commonsense approach.

We will also replace current withdrawal-liability rules with a simpler, more transparent, and consistent method for determining an employer's liability if it withdraws from a multiemployer pension plan.

We have to look to the future. In doing so, the proposal includes a new option for sponsors of multiemployer plans to establish a new hybrid pension plan that we are going to call a composite plan. We have heard a great deal of interest from smaller businesses and their workers about the benefits of a composite plan approach, including less costly operations and more certainty in the financing of these plans.

In closing, let me say that there are no perfect solutions to the multiemployer pension crisis. But it is very true that the longer we wait, the harder and more expensive this problem gets. But it is clear, our solution is far better than allowing the system to continue on its current path—to collapse—and far better than merely throwing Federal money into plans without changing how they operate. The problem is never going to be solved by waiting or by using taxpayers' money.

The House has essentially advanced a pure, no-strings-attached bailout plan that throws taxpayer money to the plans in the hope that they can somehow earn returns sufficient to keep them going. We rely a great deal on the Congressional Budget Office around here for estimates of the future, and the nonpartisan CBO has told us that the House's proposal will not generate sustainability of pension plans or the sustainability of the PBGC. So we had better not spend our time on something the Congressional Budget Office says just isn't going to bring a solution and definitely not a long-term solution to these issues.

In contrast, the proposal that Senator ALEXANDER and I are releasing today addresses the immediate needs of the few multiemployer plans facing immediate crisis in a manner that protects participant benefits and also ensures a sustainable multiemployer pension system for the long haul, and it does this all in a fiscally responsible way.

Our proposal is not a giveaway to corporations or to unions, and it is a

better deal for the taxpayers than a future that would be an even larger problem and PBGC funding needs that will almost surely be met with a taxpayer bailout.

All participants in the system would make a sacrifice. Let me make that clear. All participants in the system are going to sacrifice—employers, unions, workers, and retirees. I am sure each one of those groups isn't going to consider this fair and responsible, but with a problem like this, if everybody doesn't give a little bit, it is never going to be fair and responsible anyway. But with some shared pain will come significant shared gain that will be to the benefit of over 1.5 million participants in about 125 multiemployer plans that are in serious financial jeopardy.

Without changes to the current system, we can't say for sure that people are going to get the benefits that they sacrificed for over a lifetime of work. But our plan, we are confident, will benefit all multiemployer plans and their participants by providing a stronger system for the long haul and by promoting long-term solvency of the PBGC.

Senator ALEXANDER and I offer this proposal as a path forward for a multiemployer pension system that we all know is in crisis.

Now, as we turn to getting this job done, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate and in the House of Representatives to advance this proposal. We all know that just because you lay something on the table, that it is not necessarily going to be passed that way. So maybe there is some compromise needed. But whether it is this proposal or a little bit of compromise, we have to get this piece of legislation to the President's desk before more pension holders face losses of the benefits they have earned and benefits that they were promised.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 2486

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I rise this afternoon to talk about what some observers have called one of the best historically black colleges and universities in our country—Delaware State University in Dover, DE, home of the Hornets.

For a number of years, I was a naval flight officer in the Vietnam war and then came back to the United States and moved to Delaware and got an MBA at the University of Delaware. Right away after that, I went to work at what became the Delaware Economic Office. We were headquartered

at the campus of Delaware State College.

Delaware State College was an HBCU and was not a well-funded college, not one that was in the favor, frankly, of the Governor and legislature, for the most part, and was a bit of a stepchild.

I used to think: Boy, wouldn't it be great to be able to help transform Delaware State College into something historic, memorable, and outstanding.

Later on, I would be elected Governor—about 15 years later—and have the chance to work with the fellow who was the president of Delaware State University at the time and to transform, with the help of the Delaware General Assembly, Delaware State College into Delaware State University.

Today, of all the HBCUs in the country, I think its latest rating is No. 5, and I think there are 70 or 75 of them in all. They just reported that their enrollment for the coming year will reach 5,000 students, all in undergraduate, graduate, master's and Ph.D. programs, which is a record. We are proud of the Hornets and the great job they are doing educating people.

Last month, in one of my frequent visits to Delaware State, I took a campus tour unlike any other, from the cockpit of a brand-new Vulcanair V1.0 single-engine aircraft. We flew all over Kent County, north of Dover. We had a chance to do some approaches. It was a lot of fun, and it was basically a reminder that Delaware State provides undergraduate and graduate programs for all kinds of training and educational needs. One of the key ones right now and one of the most interesting, at least for a naval flight officer, is that Delaware State is the largest producer of pilots and aviation professionals of color in the country. I believe they have over 100 students and every one of them, when they graduate, has a job waiting for them. Some are pilots and others do a variety of work for aviation.

Today, we have about 157 million people who go to work in this country, and we have about 5 million jobs where nobody will show up. One of those areas where we need people is in the aviation world, and Delaware State is providing that. When the plane landed earlier this year at the airport just north of Dover, I held a roundtable with the Delaware State University executive vice president and provost, Dr. Tony Allen. We talked with administrators and students about a bipartisan bill called the FUTURE Act, which was discussed on the floor today and in previous days.

The FUTURE Act, as you will recall, was introduced by Senator JONES along with Senator SCOTT from South Carolina, and would provide a little over \$255 million annually to minority-serving institutions of higher education including about \$85 million to HBCUs for an additional 2 years through fiscal year 2021.

Almost \$900,000 of that money will go directly to Delaware State University.

You might ask: What would Delaware State do with that money? They use this Federal funding to help support STEM and teacher education programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels and to ensure that students at Delaware State have access to the best research tools. Specifically, this funding is used to help modernize classrooms at DSU, to improve math instruction, and to help recruit young men of color to teach in K-through-12 classrooms so that all students have mentors they can look up to.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, only 2 percent of teachers in the American public school system are African-American men, but 20 percent or more of the students are African-American males.

Think about that. A lot of these African-American males, frankly, haven't had some of the best mentors and role models in their lives growing up, and we have so few teachers of color that are minority male. The FUTURE Act funding, I think, is a good step for Congress to take to bridge that gap. I think it is a good example of how the Federal Government supports this critical mission at Delaware State and at HBCUs across the country.

Back in early September, the House of Representatives did its job and voted to reauthorize this funding through the bipartisan FUTURE Act. Unfortunately, the Senate has not followed the lead of the House in this critical funding for HBCUs which lapsed on September 30.

Before I yield to Senator COONS, I just wanted to say that my recollection is—and I might have this wrong, but I am looking for my staff, who would be sitting right here in front of me telling me if I had the right numbers—that 2 percent of teachers who are in public schools in America and I think in Delaware are men of color. They are African American. Almost 20 percent, maybe 25 percent, of the students in the public school system are people of color and about half of those are male. We need to do a better job.

As Governor, I started a mentoring program. We recruited, when I was Governor, 10,000 mentors—a lot of them to work with children of color. A lot of them have grown up in homes where they didn't have a positive male role model in their life. That is why the mentoring program is so important. That is why we especially need minority male teachers who are African American. That is not all we need, but it is a big part of what we need. Over half of the minority male teachers that we have in Delaware in our schools were educated at Delaware State University—over half—and we need more of them.

Senator COONS has joined me on the floor. I am enormously proud of Delaware State University and the leadership they have today and in the past, and proud to have been an honorary Hornet, and proud to yield to my colleague, Senator COONS, who has been

right there fighting for Delaware State University.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I would like to thank my colleague from our home State of Delaware. I come to the floor to join a number of my colleagues who are speaking on a pressing issue, the critical lapse in funding for hundreds of colleges and universities across our Nation.

On September 30, \$255 million in annual Federal funding for historically black colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions expired.

Since this fund was first created, it has supported 400 HBCUs and MSIs, historically Black colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions, across our country, including 97 HBCUs last year. This lapse has created real uncertainty and harm to these organizations and these universities, their students, their employees, and the public.

I just wanted to join my colleagues in highlighting the importance of this funding. I want to speak specifically to the HBCU of which Delaware is so proud—Delaware State University.

Delaware State is an engine for educational equity and access, for innovation and for leadership in our State, our region, and our Nation.

Delaware State University is one of the country's top public HBCUs. Its graduates go on to successful careers in all sorts of industries. Graduates from Delaware State have become some of our State's best nurses, teachers, business leaders, social workers, and Senate staff.

DSU's research programs are important drivers for innovation in a State with a proud history of invention and innovation. It is home to the Delaware Center for Neuroscience Research, a partnership of institutions across our State working to advance our understanding of how our brains form thoughts and memories and feelings, and how they change over time as we age.

It is also home to OSCAR, the Optical Science Center for Applied Research, where research that is in part federally funded is helping to speed early detection of disease, supporting our soldiers in better deterring and detecting threats, and equipping NASA missions, including the Mars Rover, with improved sensors.

To put it simply, we are very proud of Delaware State, and there is a lot of which to be proud. DSU grads are so impressive that I have asked several of them to join my staff here in Washington. Their commitment to equity and excellence is why we can't allow HBCUs around the country, such as Delaware State, to lose out on vitally needed Federal funding.

Last year, this program provided nearly \$1 million—\$887,000—to Delaware State, which is about 20 percent of their title III funding. These funds have a direct impact on students and funds critical science, math, and educator preparation programs.

There is no good reason for the Senate to ignore our HBCUs and MSIs and deny them the funding they deserve. In September, the House passed a bipartisan, budget-neutral, 2-year extension of this critical funding, which is known as the FUTURE Act. While I share Senator ALEXANDER's commitment to permanently extending this funding, we must not ask institutions to put their budgeting and planning on hold while we here in the Senate negotiate over many other pressing issues in higher education.

I urge my colleagues to pass the FUTURE Act immediately, and with that, I would like to make a motion.

Madam President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 212, H.R. 2486. I ask unanimous consent that the Murray amendment at the desk be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, reserving the right to object—and I will object—I am disappointed that my colleagues are offering such a short-term, piecemeal approach toward resolving the problems of our historically Black colleges and minority-serving institutions, when I have repeatedly offered a much better idea, and they have blocked it. I will offer it again in just a moment. I know the Senator from North Carolina is here to speak on the same subject.

Compared to what I have offered, they are offering a short-term, 2-year, budget gimmick-supported idea that will have a difficult time passing the Senate. What I have offered and they have blocked is permanent funding of historically Black colleges and minority-serving institutions—permanent funding—at the level of \$255 million a year, properly funded. That is No. 1. There is assurance from the U.S. Department of Education that every single historically Black institution—there are 97 of them—have enough funding to go until next October. Even the Senate ought to be able to do its job in that period of time.

At the same time, I have offered the Alexander-Jones bill offered by the distinguished Senator from Alabama, which would simplify the Federal aid application form called the FAFSA for 8 million minority students, among 20 million families in this country.

Why would anybody want to take a short-term, piecemeal approach that is based on a budget gimmick that couldn't pass the Senate compared with permanent funding for historically Black colleges and a bipartisan proposal to change the hated, dreaded FAFSA by reducing the number of questions you have to answer from 108 questions to between 18 and 30? This

document is the single biggest impediment to minority students going to college in America today, and the Democrats are blocking the passage of a bipartisan bill.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Madam President, I want to thank the chairman of the committee for objecting. I want to tell my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that I appreciate their being here giving the passionate speeches they have because they made the case for Senator ALEXANDER's bipartisan bill.

You see, incorporated in this legislation is an initiative by Senator JONES and Senator BALDWIN. Anybody who makes this out to be a partisan piece of legislation is just flat wrong. I have more historical Black colleges in North Carolina than any State can claim. When those chancellors and presidents have been presented with the question: Do you want 2 years or permanent, they all said permanent. They didn't know there was a permanent option.

I say this to my three colleagues because none of them are on the committee: There is a permanent option for funding historically Black colleges. It is in the chairman's bill. We have been told that the FUTURE Act needs to be passed. The FUTURE Act is 2 years long. There is not much of a future there. We ought to match its title with the chairman's bill because this really does address the future.

The No. 1 concern of historically Black institutions is predictability of funding. The chairman's bill is permanent. We are not going to come in here in 2 years and seek another reauthorization, but the benefit is that we are passing good legislation.

Let me point out to my colleagues that it is important to read legislation. The FUTURE Act is funded by whacking the funding for the State guaranty agencies. By taking away the account maintenance fees that these State-based organizations receive to administer loans, we are robbing Peter to pay Paul. These same students who are probably going to go to historically Black universities are also seeking State-based loans to do it, and we are providing the institutions 2 years of predictability on one side, and we are taking away the fees that are needed to administer the loans to allow them to be able to afford it. This is when it is important to look at the details.

The way the FUTURE Act is funded, it actually hurts all institutions in North Carolina. Just today, I heard from the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority about how important this funding is for their daily functions in administering student loans. So I believe there is a better way to extend HBC funding but also not to hurt students.

At the end of the day, our focus—the human face we see is the student who benefits from the educational oppor-

tunity they have been given. I would tell you that the FUTURE Act flunks on all counts. It is not permanent. It takes away from some because of how it is funded. We have an opportunity with Chairman ALEXANDER's bill, the Student Aid Improvement Act, which would extend this title III funding permanently, but it would also include other bipartisan support changes in higher education, like expanding Pell grants. Every Member of the Senate has sat on this floor and said we have to do something on Pell grants. Here is your opportunity.

It doesn't fit in the timeframe of passing a bill that passed the House that provides 2 years of funding, but we have a bipartisan piece of legislation. It simplifies the financial student financial aid process. You saw the chairman hold up the form. There is nobody who can defend the continuation of that form. It should be one page. The chairman of the Education Committee has tried for now 5 years to transition that to one page. You might look at us and say: Well, we can do this very quickly, but we need time to talk about this. We have taken 5 years to do this, and the people on the committee know this.

This is the sixth time you have come to the floor and asked unanimous consent to do the exact same thing: Pass this; don't look at anything else.

No, that is wrong, but it is not wrong because we are in the majority. It is wrong because it is not serving the students for whom we are supposed to be here setting policy. It simplifies aid award letters to students. It is actually easy to tell them they got their student aid. It is cumbersome. If you are on the committee, you understand the agony they go through. We are wiping all of that away.

I believe Chairman ALEXANDER has a better path. I also would like to remind my colleagues that while this funding should be extended, there has been no lapse. Let me state that again. It should be extended, and there has been no lapse.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have a letter I received from Secretary DeVos, stating that the title III funding in question is available through September 2021, be printed in the RECORD.

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

THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION,  
Washington, DC, October 9, 2019.

DEAR [REDACTED] I write to clarify the status of grants under Title III, Part F of the Higher Education Act of 1965, in light of the enactment of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020, and Health Extenders Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 116-59), signed on September 27, 2019.

Initially, I want to note that the new law has no effect on funds that we recently awarded in the Title III, Part F programs. Funds obligated in fiscal year (FY) 2019 have already been made available to grantees under all Part F programs in the Department of Education's (Department) G5 System for the project period beginning on Octo-

ber 1, 2019, and ending on September 30, 2020. Those funds will remain available to grantees for allowable uses during this period. In addition, in the Part F programs that award grants competitively, the Department has carried over FY 2019 funds into FY 2020 to support noncompeting continuation awards and supplements for project periods from October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021.

The Department's ability to make additional formula grants in FY 2020 under Part F for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities, and to conduct new competitions for FY 2021, depends on the availability of congressionally appropriated funds. However, this will have no bearing on the grant funds that have already been made available to grantees for the next 12 months.

This Administration is committed to each and every HBCU and other minority-serving institutions and the important work they do in educating historically underrepresented student populations. If you have any questions about these programs, please reach out to your program officer in the Department's Office of Postsecondary Education.

Sincerely,

BETSY DEVOS.

Mr. BURR. On that basis alone, there is not the sense of urgency that some have come to the floor six times and suggested. I don't disagree with any of my colleagues that this is something we need to do now, but a 2-year temporary bill that doesn't accomplish any of the other reforms when we have had 5 years of bipartisan work—why would we not take this option? Why would we not sit down and find a way for Chairman ALEXANDER's bill—which has many Democratic initiatives in it—to pass and provide historically Black colleges and universities with permanent funding, provide students with a one-page form to fill out for student aid, provide an expedited way for the notification when their loans have been approved? We are there, but for some reason, some want us to do a 2-year temporary fix. It is wrong. I thank the chairman for objecting.

I yield the floor.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I see the Senator from Ohio. I intend to offer my alternative to which, I gather, someone plans to object. I will go ahead and do that unless he wants to speak at this point.

Mr. BROWN. Go ahead, Senator ALEXANDER.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2557

Mr. ALEXANDER. What I will do is make my offer quickly, and then I will make my speech following the objection.

Let me summarize, to begin with, that what has just happened is I have objected to a short-term, piecemeal extension of funding for historically Black colleges and minority-serving institutions because it is a bill that, I think, will have great difficulty passing the Senate because of the way it is not properly funded. What I am about to offer, and which I will speak on after the objection is made, is permanent funding for historically Black colleges at the level of \$255 million a year—permanent funding—as opposed to short-term, piecemeal funding as part of a