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Charlotte Post: House bill would fund innovation at historically black colleges

Ratliff, Kim [Kim.Ratliff@mail.house.gov]

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To: Ratliff, Kim [Kim.Ratliff@mail.house.gov]

House bill would fund innovation at historically black colleges
Legislation authored by Rep. Alma Adams

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by [Herbert L. White](#)

A bill introduced by U.S. Rep. Alma Adams would pump new federal investments into historically black colleges for academic innovation.

H.R.4857, the HBCU Innovation Fund Act, would create a competitive grants fund available to develop initiatives for improving student achievement, recruitment and graduation rates. North Carolina has 10 accredited four-year HBCUs – more than any other state – including Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte and Livingstone College in Salisbury.

“HBCUs provide opportunities for many low-income, first generation and often minority students to get a quality education,” said Adams, a graduate of historically black N.C. A&T State University in Greensboro. “HBCUs give students the chance they deserve to succeed; however, they have been historically underfunded and lack many of the resources needed to address some of their most extreme challenges. The HBCU Innovation Fund Act is one way to help close some of the gaps that persist on HBCU campuses and within HBCU administrations.”

The HBCU Innovation Fund Act would go to programs to increase enrollment and completion of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics degrees. The legislation would also pay for the redesign of course offerings to reduce education costs, expand the use of technology; and strengthen postgraduate employment outcomes for students.

“UNCF applauds the introduction of the HBCU Innovation Fund Act, and we greatly appreciate Congresswoman Alma Adams’ outstanding leadership on behalf of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, including the 37-member HBCUs we support for the planning and implementation of programs that improve student achievement, increase recruitment, increase graduation rates,” United Negro College Fund President Michael Lomax said in a statement. “This legislation would build the capacity of our colleges to develop, test, and implement new approaches that can help HBCUs surmount current challenges and meet the nation’s need for skilled college graduates.”

Lomax said the innovation fund is similar to the UNCF Career Pathways Initiative, a private competitive grant program.

Adams is co-chair of the 56-member Bipartisan Congressional HBCU Caucus and member of the House Education and the Workforce Committee and Subcommittee on Higher Education.

The bill is co-sponsored by 15 other representatives.

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