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## New Companies Join Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus' Landmark Partnership Challenge

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Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2019 5:27 PM

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Thursday, July 25, 2019**

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### New Companies Join Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus' Landmark Partnership Challenge

**WASHINGTON, DC**– Today, during the 2nd Annual Diversity in Tech Summit, the Congressional Bipartisan Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Caucus announced the addition of BB&T, SunTrust, IBM, Visa, Twitter, Allstate, Zillow, and GlaxoSmithKline into its landmark HBCU Partnership Challenge. The Challenge is now comprised of 35 national entities that are committed to working with HBCUs to forge stronger, strategic partnerships.

The Bipartisan HBCU Caucus launched the HBCU Partnership Challenge in 2017. Challenge participants have made a commitment to incorporate HBCUs within their diversity and inclusion efforts. Each quarter, Challenge participants convene with HBCUs and Members of Congress to forge stronger, more sustainable HBCU and industry partnerships.

HBCUs produce 42 percent of all Black engineers and 47 percent of all Black female engineers. These institutions provide a pathway to opportunity for millions of Americans," **said Congresswoman Adams**. "The Bipartisan HBCU Caucus is committed to leveling the playing field for HBCUs and the students they serve - but we can't do it alone. I'm proud to welcome eight more companies to the Partnership Challenge. Together, we will create meaningful, long-term partnerships to ensure HBCU students have equal access to 21<sup>st</sup> century career opportunities."

Guided by our brand promise of universal acceptance for everyone, everywhere, Visa is committed to diversity and inclusion in our business. The Visa family comprises people of many countries, faiths, ethnicities and experiences, and our diversity is a true asset to our brand," **said Alfred F. Kelly, Jr., Chairman and CEO, Visa Inc.** "Our partnerships with HBCUs have yielded tremendous talent for our company and we commend the HBCU Caucus for bringing the Diversity in Tech Summit together for an important discussion on diversity and innovation."

"IBM has a 100+ year history of work in diversity and inclusion and we are proud of our partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities," **said Tia Silas, IBM Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer**. "We are focused on how we prepare students for the future of work, and IBM's Skills Academy has been a way for us to provide training and infrastructure to prepare faculty to teach high demand skills. For example, our partnership with Prairie View A&M has enabled three new courses to be taught this fall in blockchain, data science and artificial intelligence. We know that public-private partnerships like these are critical to fueling diverse innovation. That's why IBM is accepting the HBCU Partnership Pledge today, and why we look forward to contributing to this mission."

"Zillow believes in the value of investing in HBCUs because they provide the collaborative learning environment that is transforming students into tomorrow's leaders. Through our participation in the HBCU Partnership Challenge, we are showing our firm commitment to strengthening our recruiting pipeline by engaging with HBCUs and hope to find many of the talented employees it will take to achieve our goal there," **said Racquel Russell, vice president of government relations and public affairs at Zillow Group**. "As we continue to work towards our goal to create an on-demand real estate experience for consumers, we know we need a diverse workforce to address the unique needs of all our consumers."

As part of the Diversity in Tech Summit, Twitter is honored to join forces with the Congressional Bipartisan Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Caucus," said **Carlos Monje, Jr., Twitter Director of Public Policy and Philanthropy, U.S. & Canada**. "We are unwavering in our commitment to keeping inclusion and diversity front and center in the way we approach our work. We appreciate this opportunity to collaborate with government, HBCU leaders and stakeholders."

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