

Reps. Adams & Hill, Sens. Scott & Coons, Announce Landmark Legislation on HBCUs



From Alma Adams Press <sam.spencer@mail.house.gov>
To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <sam.spencer@mail.house.gov>
Date 2021-05-07 10:15



Reps. Adams & Hill, Sens. Scott & Coons, Announce Landmark Legislation on HBCUs

*The bipartisan **IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act** represents the largest federal investment in the history of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, **Congresswoman Alma Adams (D-NC), Senator Tim Scott (R-SC), Senator Chris Coons (D-DE), and Representative French Hill (R-AR)** announced the ***Institutional Grants for New Infrastructure, Technology, and Education at HBCUs Act (IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act)***. The legislation would make historic investments in Historically Black Colleges and Universities to rectify over a century of systemic neglect.

“The ***IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act*** is the most transformative legislation for Historically Black Colleges and Universities in history,” **said Congresswoman Adams, Founder and Co-Chair of the Bipartisan HBCU Caucus.** “For over 150 years, HBCUs have been agents of equity, access, and excellence in education, despite being ignored and marginalized by federal and state governments. This historic, bipartisan bill changes that. The ***IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act*** invests in our HBCU facilities to give students state-of-the-art learning environments and enables HBCUs to continue to be a critical source of diversity in the workforce for another century and beyond.”

[Rep. Adams' video introduction of the legislation is available here.](#)

[A description of the bill is available here.](#)

“Arkansas is home to four HBCUs and I am pleased to co-lead this bipartisan and bicameral bill with my colleagues to further bolster HBCUs,” **said Rep. French Hill, Co-Chair of the Bipartisan HBCU Caucus.** “The bipartisan IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act reflects a good faith effort to work across the aisle in order to ensure that HBCUs have a bright future ahead of them so they and their students will continue to succeed. This measure encourages private philanthropy accompanying public state and federal investments on HBCU campuses to boost their long term competitiveness.”

“Historically Black Colleges and Universities open doors to opportunity for thousands of students each year, many of whom come from underserved communities,” **said Senator Tim Scott, Co-Chair of the Bipartisan HBCU Caucus.** “For decades, HBCUs have educated and produced top-notch graduates in every field—all while operating on minimal budgets. I can only imagine what more they will accomplish with proper funding, and I am proud that my colleagues and I have come together to support this transformational, bipartisan bill.”

“Historically Black Colleges and Universities have long been institutions advancing equity and academic excellence as they train the future generation of community leaders, innovators, educators, and freedom fighters,” **said Senator Chris Coons, Co-Chair of the Bipartisan HBCU Caucus.** “Funding for HBCUs is critical to providing educational resources for low-income students, first generation college students, and those most at risk of not entering college. HBCUs, like Delaware State University, consistently produce our next leaders, and we must ensure they have the resources to effectively attract students and continue to promote success. The IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act will modernize campuses across the country – ensuring that HBCUs have the technology, facilities, and resources to continue their transformational work.”

“The **IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act** is potentially a game-changer for HBCUs,” **said Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) President and CEO Dr. Harry L. Williams.** “By passing the IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act, Congress would be making an affirmative statement that HBCUs and their students deserve the same state-of-the-art facilities, whether they are classrooms, laboratories or library facilities, that they have been long deprived of due to decades of underfunding. In order for our nation to reach its full potential, we must strategically invest in and equitably support each post-secondary student population today to help ensure that our nation has the workforce capable of meeting tomorrow’s challenges. This legislation is a smart investment to maintain our nation’s global competitiveness and we urge Congress to pass The IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act this year.”

“The infrastructure needs of HBCUs is a decades old issue, and the time has come to address those needs,” **said Dr. Michael L. Lomax, president and CEO of UNCF (United Negro College**

Fund). “We appreciate this bipartisan group of legislators who have identified a way to make a major impact on our campuses. This investment, which is absolutely needed, speaks to larger issues such as underfunding of HBCUs, systemic ways of accessing capital that disadvantages both Black people and Black organizations like HBCUs, and the needs of students who bring both diversity and aptitude to our Nation’s future workforce. We offer our support, and we call on the Congress to pass this bill during this session.”

Said National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO) President Lezli Baskerville, “The infrastructure grants to improve the facilities, increase Broadband access and speed, abate environmental hazards, and enhance or establish centers for innovative research, and difficult discussions will create state-of-the art environments on HBCU campuses and in their service communities for igniting more sowers, servant leaders, scientists, and those who will leave comfortable shores. An example of what might be funded is the BEST Lives Center on tap at Benedict College in South Carolina. NAFEO is grateful to the initial cosponsors and those who are cure to join in sponsoring this environmental enhancing legislation.”

While only representing roughly 3 percent of all four-year colleges and universities, HBCUs produce upwards of 17 percent of all bachelor’s degrees awarded to African Americans. Additionally, HBCUs enroll a disproportionately high percentage of first generation and low-income students, nearly 60 percent, and outperform their peers in supporting and graduating these students.

The incredible success of HBCUs has been achieved despite over a century of systemic underfunding at both the state and federal levels. Too often, HBCUs are forced to navigate the effects of chronic underfunding while also lacking access to alternate sources of capital available to other institutions.

The ***IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act*** invests in infrastructure at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The IGNITE HBCUs Act recognizes the contributions of these institutions in the most important way possible: by affording them the support and investment needed to deepen their transformational work. Specifically, it would authorize funds to:

- Renovate, repair, modernize, or construct new campus facilities, including instructional, research, and residential spaces;
- Provide access to campus-wide, reliable high-speed broadband to support digital learning and long-term technological capacity;
- Develop campus facilities to support community-based partnerships that provide students and community members with academic, health, and social services;
- Procure equipment and technology needed to facilitate high-quality research and instruction;
- Preserve buildings with historic significance; and

- Ensure the resilience, safety, and sustainability of campus facilities.

Congresswoman Alma Adams represents North Carolina's 12th Congressional District (Charlotte, Mecklenburg County). In 2015, she founded the first bipartisan Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Caucus in Congress. In 2019, her previous landmark legislation to invest in HBCUs, the FUTURE Act, was signed into law. She is a double graduate of North Carolina A&T, the largest HBCU by enrollment in the United States.

###

Sam Spencer
Communications Director
Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, NC-12
2436 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 202-225-1510 Fax: 202-225-1512

Connect with us



Office of Congresswoman Alma Adams | 801 E. Morehead St, Suite 150, Charlotte, NC 28202
Phone: 704-344-9950

[Unsubscribe sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org](mailto:sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org)

[Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by sam.spencer@mail.house.gov