

## Rep. Adams' Landmark HBCU Legislation Receives Warm Welcome in Washington



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*The IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act is the most transformative legislation for HBCUs ever*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. –** Congresswoman Alma Adams' (D-NC) *Institutional Grants for New Infrastructure, Technology, and Education for HBCU Excellence Act (IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act)* is receiving high praise in Washington, D.C. and beyond. Both the White House and the organizations that work closest with Historically Black Colleges and Universities praised the bill. The legislation would make historic investments in Historically Black Colleges and Universities to rectify over a century of systemic neglect.

**Adams** is introducing the bill with **Rep. French Hill (R-AR)** in the House, and **Senators Chris Coons (D-DE) and Tim Scott (R-SC)** in the Senate.

“The *IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act* is the most transformative legislation for Historically Black Colleges and Universities ever,” **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.](#)

**Read more below:**

[\*\*The Hill: Updating the aging infrastructure in Historically Black Colleges and Universities\*\*](#)

*Our HBCUs have unlocked opportunities for generations of students, especially in underserved communities, with patriotic legacies like World War II's Tuskegee Airmen from the university of the same name, “hidden figures” like Katherine Johnson who helped us win the space race, and astronaut Ronald McNair, who lost his life in the Challenger explosion. HBCUs have achieved all of this on shoestring budgets. Despite more than a century of underfunding, as well as a lack of access to traditional sources of capital, HBCUs not only survived but thrived, graduating leaders from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to Vice President Kamala Harris.*

[\*\*McClatchy DC: Aging campuses? Lawmakers want to help modernize historically Black colleges, universities\*\*](#)

*A White House spokesperson said HBCUs have been “historically under-utilized and under-resourced” in research and development and the president wants to “ensure that we are tapping onto the talent of those institutions.” The White House supports proposals to fund the preservation of buildings and looks forward to working with the HBCU Caucus leaders on their proposal to send additional money to the schools for repairs, the spokesperson said.*

[\*\*TMCF APPLAUDS THE INTRODUCTION OF THE IGNITE HBCU EXCELLENCE ACT\*\*](#)

*“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.”*

### **Praise from UNCF and NAFEO**

*“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 sure to join in sponsoring this environmental enhancing legislation.”*

### **North Carolina A&T on Twitter**

*@RepAdams, Thank you for your leadership! #AggiesDo TODAY, @RepAdams, @SenatorTimScott, @ChrisCoons, and @RepFrenchHill Announce Landmark Legislation on HBCUs! The bipartisan #IGNITEHBCU Excellence Act represents the largest federal investment in the history of #HBCUs!*

### **ICYMI: Senator Scott and HBCU Caucus Colleagues Fight to Improve HBCU Infrastructure**

*This week, Senators Scott and Coons, along with Representatives Alma Adams and French Hill, rolled out their IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act. The bill will invest in infrastructure at HBCUs, allowing them to maintain and expand their transformational work.*

### **The Grio: Sen. Scott, Rep. Adams sponsor bipartisan bill to improve HBCU infrastructure**

*A bipartisan bill co-sponsored by South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott and North Carolina Rep. Alma Adams would direct money to renovate and modernize buildings at more than 100 of the nation’s historic Black colleges and universities. Scott and Adams, who was a former professor at Bennett College, wrote an opinion piece for The Hill in which they said the bill — called the IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act — represents a good investment in HBCUs and the American people.*

### **Black Information Network: Tim Scott, Alma Adams Pen Op-Ed In Support Of HBCU Infrastructure Bill**

*Scott, the only Black Republican serving in the Senate currently, and*

*Adams, a Democratic representative of North Carolina, added that both of them have “championed HBCUs” during their time in Congress. During the last Congress, two HBCU-related bills were signed by the president, the **FUTURE Act** and the **HBCU Partners Act**. This latest act, **Scott and Adams**, who is a graduate of North Carolina A&T University, said, is to “renovate, modernize, or construct new campus facilities,” for HBCUs across the country.*

### **Queen City Nerve: Rep. Adams Announces Landmark Legislation on HBCUs**

*Congresswoman Alma Adams (D-NC) of Charlotte joined Rep. French Hill and Sens. Tim Scott and Chris Coons on Friday to announce the **Institutional Grants for New Infrastructure, Technology, and Education at HBCUs Act (IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act)**, which would signal the largest federal investment in the history of **Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)**.*

**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.

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