

Adams, Hill Announce Arrival, BASF, Covanta, The CW Network, Hilton, NetApp, and Walgreens Join HBCU Partnership Challenge



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*Announcement comes on the heels of Alaska Airlines and
American Airlines joining the Challenge*

Washington, D.C. – As part of the HBCU Caucus Virtual Partnership Luncheon, **Congresswoman Alma Adams (D-NC-12)**, and **Rep. French Hill (R-AR-02)**, co-chairs of the bipartisan Congressional HBCU Caucus, announced that **Arrival, BASF, Covanta, The CW Network, Hilton, NetApp, and Walgreens** are joining the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Partnership Challenge. **[The HBCU Partnership Challenge is an effort to promote](#)**

greater engagement and support between private companies and HBCUs.

Additionally, **Alaska Airlines** and **American Airlines** officially joined the Challenge, **bringing the total number of HBCU Partnership Challenge participants to 71.**

“I’m proud to welcome nine companies to the Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus’ HBCU Partnership Challenge,” said **Congresswoman Alma Adams (D-NC-12)**, founder and Co-Chair of the Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus. “Arrival, BASF, Covanta, The CW, Hilton, NetApp, Walgreens, Alaska Airlines, and American Airlines are all coming together to support our HBCUs. I applaud all our private partners for taking the pledge at such a critical time. Through the power of partnerships, our HBCUs will continue to have an outsized impact in higher education.”

“I applaud Alaska Airlines, American Airlines, Hilton, Covanta, Walgreens, BASF, NetApp, Arrival and The CW’s commitment to the HBCU community by joining the HBCU Partnership Challenge,” **said Rep. French Hill (R-AR-02), Co-Chair of the Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus.** “The HBCU partnership challenge demonstrates the strength of public-private partnerships and philanthropic support for America’s HBCU community. I have seen first-hand how private partnerships with HBCUs can be impactful. This support is a vital part of further bolstering our HBCUs and bringing their needs to the forefront of Congressional priorities.”

"We're excited to join the HBCU Partnership Challenge and tap into the amazing pipeline of talent that comes out of these colleges and universities," **said Mike Ableson, CEO of Arrival Automotive.** "At **Arrival**, diversity, equity and inclusion are at the core of our culture and our vision to create radical impact. Through an inclusive, diverse workforce and culture, we are able to unlock creativity and bring the best ideas to the table, creating an equitable future by empowering communities and working

together to drive true sustainability. From our internal employee diversity groups, to partnering with cities to ensure we reach their most underserved communities, to testing our products with people of all different genders, abilities and backgrounds - we're focused on a sustainable future for all."

"We at **BASF** are excited to take this important step in deepening our partnerships in support of HBCUs and their legacy of support for great talent," **said Patricia Rossman, Chief Diversity + Inclusion Officer.** "Recognizing the role that HBCUs play in bringing strong talent to the workforce, BASF is committed to achieving the HBCU Partnership Challenge, and we look forward to supporting shared success."

"**Covanta** is grateful for the opportunity to join the HBCU Partnership Challenge and believes a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace is key to our long-term success, both in business and in helping solve key societal challenges around waste and climate change," **said Derek Veenhof, COO of Covanta.** "As part of our DE&I program, we set public targets to increase the share of diverse representation across the organization including in training, recruiting, performance evaluations, community outreach and environmental performance. The HBCU partnership gives us a unique channel directly into a tremendous amount of diverse talent. The possibilities are endless with these students and we look forward to recruiting the next generation of Covanta leaders from Historically Black Colleges and Universities."

As members of the HBCU Partnership Challenge, Covanta pledges to recruit at a minimum of five HBCUs strategically located near their facilities in Virginia, Maryland and Alabama. Internships would be for rising juniors and seniors or seniors taking a gap year before graduate school. Interns have the added benefit of being considered for Covanta's Early Career Develop Program upon graduation. Moreover, they also offer a continuous improvement curriculum with faculty to interested HBCUs and will develop an annual \$10,000 scholarship for students from these institutions near where Covanta will recruit.

“It is a genuine honor and privilege for **The CW** to join forces with Congresswoman Adams and the Bipartisan HBCU Caucus and lend our support in the HBCU Partnership Challenge, helping to contribute to the growth and success of the many HBCUs across the country, shining a spotlight on their tremendous work, as well as the work done by their students, alumni and faculty,” **said Mark Pedowitz, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, The CW Network.** “As one of the most diverse television networks in front of and behind the camera, The CW is extremely proud to offer a platform that showcases the incredible talents of the many HBCU alumni who star in and produce our hit programming, and the timing couldn’t be better, as two of our new shows this season will specifically center on HBCUs with our new drama *All American: Homecoming* and a docuseries celebrating HBCU marching bands. We thank Congresswoman Adams and the Caucus for their dedication and leadership, and we pledge to continue to strengthen our commitment to diversity and inclusion in all areas of our business.”

“We are honored to add our name to the HBCU Partnership Challenge,” **said Laura Fuentes, chief human resources officer, Hilton.** “For over a century, we have been on a journey to build the most inclusive culture for all, and creating that culture begins with building a diverse pipeline of top talent. We have long worked with HBCUs, and we look forward to accelerating these efforts in new and innovative ways as we work to attract, recruit and train the hospitality leaders of tomorrow.”

“**NetApp** is proud to join the Bipartisan HBCU Partnership Challenge. We have long recognized the powerful contributions of HBCUs and are inspired by the young innovators we mentor and sponsor through our partnerships. We look forward to collaborating with our Congressional leaders as well as fellow corporations to preserve the unique role these institutions play in our society,” **said Gerri Mason Hall, NetApp Global VP DI&B and UNCF Board Member.**

In addition to joining the HBCU Partnership Challenge, NetApp serves on the board of Advancing Minorities' Interest in Engineering (AMIE), a coalition of corporations, government agencies and the Engineering Schools at the ABET-accredited HBCUs whose primary purpose is to facilitate partnerships between corporations and/or government agencies and HBCU engineering programs, as well as the board of the UNCF which oversees a range of scholarship funds for students attending HBCUs. The company actively recruits at HBCUs and has offered various scholarships and technical challenge programs to support the development of key talent including most recently at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

"At **Walgreens**, we recognize the great value that HBCU students and alumni bring to our company to advance innovation and maintain our position as a global leader in pharmacy retail. We are proud to further our commitment to the HBCU community by joining Rep. Alma Adams' HBCU Partnership Challenge," **said Carlos Cubia, SVP, Global Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, Walgreens Boots Alliance.**

The Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus' Partnership Challenge encourages participating organizations to make greater investments in HBCUs. In addition to the Virtual Partnership Luncheon, the Caucus hosts numerous events every year including HBCU STEAM Day of Action, HBCU Day, and the Diversity in Tech Summit. For more information, please contact Sam Spencer (Sam.Spencer@mail.house.gov).

About Alma Adams

Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. represents North Carolina's 12th Congressional District (Charlotte) and serves as Vice Chair of the House Committee on Agriculture. Additionally, she serves on the House Financial Services Committee and the House Education & Labor Committee, where she serves as Chair of the Workforce Protections Subcommittee. In 2015, she founded the first bipartisan Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Caucus in Congress.

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