

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 2, 2016

Senator Dan Coats
Chairman
Joint Economic Committee
493 Russell Office Bldg
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Carolyn Maloney
Ranking Member
Joint Economic Committee
2308 Rayburn House of Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Coats and Ranking Member Maloney:

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) are a very important part of America's higher education system. There are more than 100 HBCUs across our nation, and while these schools represent just three percent of our country's institutions of higher learning, they graduate nearly 20 percent of African Americans who earn undergraduate degrees.

According to the United Negro College Fund, HBCUs generate 25 percent of all bachelor degrees in STEM fields earned by African Americans. Additionally, HBCUs award 14 percent of all African American engineering degrees at less than half the cost of other four-year colleges and universities.

HBCUs have made many significant contributions to our country including having historically served as the only option for African Americans interested in pursuing higher education. HBCUs also serve as culture hubs for students from all across the world. However, despite these contributions, many HBCUs have come under increased scrutiny due to a lack of knowledge surrounding the significant impact they have on their students, employees, local communities, and the entire country. Too often, conversations about HBCUs are centered on their relevancy, instead of their necessity.

In order to better understand the necessity and unique contributions that our nation's HBCUs make on a consistent basis, we are requesting that the Joint Economic Committee conduct a study on the economic impact of these institutions. Specifically, we would like this study to examine economic factors such as student outcomes, academic research, employee salaries, institution spending, student spending, and the multiplier effect of these factors. Finally this study should explore the ability of HBCUs to graduate low-income students and the impact that an HBCU degree has on achieving positive upward mobility for its graduates.

This study will be critical in educating members of Congress and the general public about the integral role HBCUs play and support the mission of the first Bipartisan HBCU Caucus that we launched earlier this year. Making this information available to the Caucus membership will be instrumental in

supporting our goal of educating Members and their staff. It will also better inform our decision making around policy creation and resource allocation that will help preserve and expand the role of HBCUs in our larger economy.

HBCUs are a solid return on investment to their students and the entire country, and we believe this study will showcase what supporters of HBCUs have known for some time. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important matter. We look forward to working with you and the Joint Economic Committee to accomplish this important work.



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



Bradley Byrne
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman
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Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
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Emanuel Cleaver, II
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Steve Cohen
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John Conyers, Jr.
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Elijah E. Cummings
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Donna F. Edwards
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Keith Ellison
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Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
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Betty McCollum
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Stacey Plaskett
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David Price
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Cedric L. Richmond
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Eddie Bernice Johnson
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Mark Walker
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Frederica Wilson
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