

October 3, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Room S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Room S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leaders Schumer and Jeffries:

On behalf of the American Council on Education and the undersigned higher education associations, I write in response to the recent announcement by the Department of Education (Department) to terminate fiscal year (FY) 2025 funding for Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs)¹ and redirect the funding to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). These HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs serve the largest proportion of students who are least advantaged with the greatest financial need, and all of these institutions need increased federal investment. Also, when MSIs receive these critical funds, they are able to close significant achievement gaps and enhance graduation rates for all students.² The abrupt and deeply damaging elimination of funding this late in the fiscal year for MSIs will cause irreparable harm to hundreds of institutions that are currently receiving funding, most of which are open or near open-enrollment. In addition, millions of students of all colors that attend these institutions across all regions of the country will be impacted if not corrected. For these reasons, we ask you to not only maintain and expand funding for all of these programs in FY 2026 but to also restore the critical funding for MSIs that was unilaterally and unexpectedly terminated in FY 2025.

Over the last several decades, Congress has funded these programs with strong and continuous bipartisan support.³ These programs also received clear support in the FY 2026 President's Budget Request, with each program receiving level funding and were described as follows:

The request for Aid for Institutional Development (Title III) would increase institutional capacity and student support at HBCUs, TCCUs, and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs). A significant number of postsecondary education institutions that serve large percentages of students of color and students from low-income backgrounds face challenges that threaten their continued operation and ability to provide a high-quality education. The Administration is committed to assisting these institutions by providing funds to support, among other activities, improvements in academic quality, institutional management, administrative capacity and fiscal stability,

¹ These MSIs include Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions (ANNHs); Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs); Native American-Serving, Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs); Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs); and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)

² American Council on Education. (2025, March 27). *ACE, MSI data project release report highlighting critical role of HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs*. <https://www.acenet.edu/News-Room/Pages/MSI-Data-Brief-Press-Release.aspx>

³ Office of the Clerk. (2025). *Roll Call 544 | Bill Number: H. R. 4137*. U.S. House of Representatives. <https://clerk.house.gov/Votes/2008544>

infrastructure, and student support services.⁴

All MSIs that are receiving, and are eligible to receive, funding under Titles III and V of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 are institutions that have been determined by the Department to have lower general educational expenditures than their peer institutions and enroll a student population which at least 50 percent, regardless of race, receive federal need-based assistance.⁵ According to the Department's 2025 eligibility matrix, there are a total of 458 MSIs that are currently receiving funding and 1,489 additional MSIs that are eligible to receive funding from Title III and V of the HEA.^{6,7} Together, MSIs enroll millions of students,⁸ and terminating funding for these institutions will directly harm the educational experiences of all students on their campuses and our nation loses.

We ask you to continue to support these millions of students and the institutions that serve them by providing sufficient funding for MSIs in FY 2026 and restore the funding for these programs that was terminated in FY 2025. All these institutions have value, and Congress should continue to demonstrate its history of strong bipartisan support.

Sincerely,



Ted Mitchell
President

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education
Association of American Universities
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Council for Advancement and Support of Education
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Council for Opportunity in Education
Council of Graduate Schools
EDUCAUSE
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

⁴ U.S. Department of Education. (2025). *Fiscal year 2026 budget summary*. <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fiscal-year-2026-budget-summary-110043.pdf>

⁵ Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. §1058(b)(1). Also, these institutions must enroll a certain percentage of a minority demographic on their campus but they may receive a waiver from having lower general educational expenditures and/or enrolling at least 50 percent of students on federal need-based assistance.

⁶ These numbers include the Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program

⁷ Department of Education. (2025). *2025 eligibility matrix*. https://www.ed.gov/search?search_api_fulltext=eligibility+matrix

⁸ Estimates conducted by ACE using data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
National Coalition for Predominantly Black Institutions of Higher Education

Cc:

The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations