



**2ND ANNUAL STATE OF HBCUs
MARCH 3, 2020
REMARKS OF MICHAEL L. LOMAX, PH.D.
PRESIDENT AND CEO, UNCF**

THANK YOU, DR. KIMBROUGH.

THIS IS OUR SECOND ANNUAL STATE OF HBCUs EVENT. AND IT IS
A GOOD TIME TO TAKE STOCK OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE WE MET
A YEAR AGO.

AT MOST STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESSES, AND AT STATE OF THE UNION SPEECHES, THE GOVERNOR OR THE PRESIDENT DECLARES THAT THE STATE OF THE UNION IS STRONG.

NOW, CERTAINLY THERE IS A LOT TO CELEBRATE FROM THE LAST YEAR. AND BELIEVE ME, WE ARE GOING TO CELEBRATE THE HONOR ROLL TODAY OF THOSE WHO DID SO MUCH TO ENSURE THAT HBCUs CONTINUE TO THRIVE. BUT I CANNOT STAND BEFORE YOU HERE TODAY AND SAY *ONLY* THAT THE STATE OF HBCUs IS STRONG, OR ONLY THAT HBCUs REMAIN RESILIENT.

AS YOU KNOW, THOSE TRUTHS ARE ONLY PART OF THE STORY.

THE OTHER PART OF THE STORY IS THE UNMET NEEDS OF HBCUs AND THEIR STUDENTS' NEEDS THAT REMAIN SO URGENT. AND SO I WANT TO TALK TO YOU TODAY ABOUT WHAT I'LL CALL THE HBCU PARADOX.

IT'S MY HOPE, IT'S UNCF'S HOPE, THAT A YEAR FROM NOW WHEN WE MEET AGAIN, WE WILL HAVE TAKEN A GIANT STRIDE TO END THE HBCU PARADOX AND SECURE THE TRANSFORMATIONAL SUPPORT THAT HBCUs HAVE LONG DESERVED AND LONG GONE WITHOUT.

SO, WHAT IS THE HBCU PARADOX? IT'S A LABEL FOR A
PHENOMENON THAT EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM WILL FIND FAMILIAR.
ON THE ONE HAND, WE KNOW THAT HBCUs ARE AMONG THE FEW
INSTITUTIONS IN AMERICA THAT ENJOY CONSISTENT BIPARTISAN
SUPPORT. PRESIDENTS, SENATORS, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, CLERGY,
NEWS COMMENTATORS, ACTORS, ARTISTS, AND ATHLETES—YOU
NAME IT--THE GAMUT OF AMERICAN SOCIETY HAILS HBCUs AND THE
ROLE THEY HAVE PLAYED IN THE HISTORY OF OUR NATION.

AND YET. . . **AND YET** HERE IS THE PARADOX. DESPITE ALL OF
THAT BIPARTISAN SUPPORT, HBCUs HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WOEFULLY

UNDERFUNDED THROUGHOUT THEIR NEARLY TWO CENTURIES OF HISTORY. AND IN 2020, WE ARE STILL BADLY UNDERFUNDED--DESPITE THE VERY-REAL VICTORIES WE WON IN CONGRESS LAST YEAR, WITH THE BIPARTISAN SUPPORT OF MANY OF THE PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM HERE TODAY.

THE HBCU PARADOX HAS SOME PERNICIOUS CONSEQUENCES. TOO OFTEN, IT CREATES AN ALL TOO CONVENIENT GAP BETWEEN RHETORIC AND REALITY. IT MAKES IT EASY FOR PEOPLE TO *LOOK* AND *SOUND* LIKE THEY ARE HBCU BOOSTERS, WITHOUT HAVING TO TAKE

THE HARD STEPS AND MAKE A DEEP-SEATED COMMITMENT TO
ERADICATING DECADES OF DISPARATE TREATMENT OF HBCUs.

SO I WANT TO TALK FOR A FEW MINUTES ABOUT, FIRST, WHY I
THINK THE HBCU PARADOX HAS PERSISTED FOR SO LONG; AND
SECOND, WHY I THINK THERE ARE REASONS FOR OPTIMISM THAT ITS
DAYS ARE NUMBERED.

NOW, AS TO WHY THIS PHENOMENON HAS PERSISTED FOR SO
LONG, I WOULD GIVE TWO REASONS FOR THIS PARADOXICAL
ATTITUDE OF GOVERNMENT, CORPORATIONS, AND PHILANTHROPY

TOWARD HBCUs. CERTAINLY FEW DOUBT THAT HBCUs ENJOY AND DESERVE BIPARTISAN SUPPORT. BUT UNFORTUNATELY, AS WE HAVE LEARNED FROM HARD EXPERIENCE, THAT SUPPORT, TOO OFTEN, IS A MILE WIDE AND AN INCH DEEP.

FEW LAWMAKERS AND POLICYMAKERS PUBLICLY CRITICIZE HBCUs AND THEIR HISTORIC ROLE IN EDUCATING BLACK AMERICANS. A LAWMAKER HAS LITTLE TO GAIN FROM CRITICIZING A HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY, PARTICULARLY A COLLEGE IN THEIR DISTRICT. YET TOO FEW LAWMAKERS AND POLICYMAKERS STEP UP TO BATTLE FOR HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS—YES, HUNDREDS

OF MILLIONS—OF NEW FUNDING FOR HBCUS OUTSIDE THEIR HOME DISTRICTS AND ELEVATE HBCUs TO THEIR TOP PRIORITIES.

NOW, WE'RE JUST A COUPLE OF WEEKS OFF FROM THE START OF MARCH MADNESS. AND FOR ONE SHINING MOMENT LAST YEAR, HBCUs WERE A TOP PRIORITY IN WASHINGTON. I'M REFERRING, OF COURSE, TO THE PASSAGE OF THE FUTURE ACT IN DECEMBER.

THAT NEW LAW PROVIDES \$255 MILLION IN CONTINUED FUNDING TO BOOST SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH (STEM) OPPORTUNITIES AT A VARIETY OF MINORITY-SERVING

INSTITUTIONS. \$85 MILLION OF THAT FUNDING WILL GO TO HBCUs
EACH YEAR, IN PERPETUITY.

THE PASSAGE OF THE FUTURE ACT WAS ABSOLUTELY VITAL TO
HBCUs. AND IT WAS A CRITICAL COMMITMENT BY CONGRESS TO THE
ROLE HBCUs PLAY IN ENHANCING STEM OPPORTUNITIES AND
OUTCOMES FOR MINORITY STUDENTS.

THAT TRIUMPH COULD NOT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED WITHOUT THE
SUPPORT OF MANY LAWMAKERS WHO ARE HERE WITH US TODAY.
THOSE CONGRESSPEOPLE AND SENATORS ARE MALE AND FEMALE;

BLACK, WHITE, AND LATINO; AND YES, THEY ARE REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS. A REPUBLICAN PRESIDENT SIGNED THE BILL INTO LAW.

NOW, I WANT TO BE CLEAR ABOUT THIS. WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT, AND SO ARE THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS AT OUR INSTITUTIONS.

THINK OF THE THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS WHOSE LIVES WILL BE CHANGED FOR THE BETTER BY THE FUTURE ACT BECAUSE THEY GOT TO EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES IN STEM THAT OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT NEVER HAVE HAD.

BUT AS APPRECIATIVE AND GRATEFUL AS UNCF IS OF YOUR EFFORTS, THE PASSAGE OF THE FUTURE ACT ALSO RAISES AN OBVIOUS QUESTION. WHY DID IT TAKE SO LONG TO PASS THE FUTURE ACT, AND, MORE IMPORTANT, WHY ISN'T THERE MORE LEGISLATION LIKE IT BEING PASSED INTO LAW?

FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, UNCF HAS CALLED FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL INVESTMENTS IN HBCUs AND STUDENT AID PROGRAMS TO CLOSE EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY GAPS FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR—AND ALL LOW-INCOME STUDENTS ACROSS OUR NATION.

WE HAVE MADE THE CASE FOR A \$1 BILLION GRANT INVESTMENT
IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF HBCU CAMPUSES SO THEY CAN FAIRLY
COMPETE IN THE 21ST CENTURY ECONOMY. WE HAVE CALLED FOR
DOUBLING THE AMOUNT OF PELL GRANT AWARDS, SO THAT THESE
SCHOLARSHIPS ONCE AGAIN COVER THE BULK OF TUITION AND ROOM
AND BOARD, AS THEY DID FOR AN EARLIER GENERATION OF HBCU
STUDENTS. AND LET ME SAY THIS: PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN AFTER
PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN HAS SINCE CALLED FOR DOUBLING PELL.
HOWEVER, WE SAID IT HERE FIRST LAST YEAR. WE ARE GLAD TO LEAD
THE EDUCATION SECTOR ON THIS RECOMMENDATION, BECAUSE WE

KNOW THE POWERFUL IMPACT DOUBLING PELL WOULD HAVE ON
HBCUs AND OUR STUDENT POPULATION AND ALL PELL-ELIGIBLE
STUDENTS IN OUR NATION. THE PELL GRANT IS “AMERICA’S
SCHOLARSHIP” FOR THE STUDENTS WHO NEED IT THE MOST, AND WE
NEED TO TREAT IT AS SUCH.

SO, YES, THE FUTURE ACT IS VITAL. BUT IT CANNOT BECOME A
ONE-OFF ACCOMPLISHMENT ON WHICH TO REST OUR LAURELS.

THE PASSAGE OF THE FUTURE ACT SHOULD NOT BE AN
EXCEPTION. IT SHOULD BE THE NORM FOR A CONGRESS COMMITTED

TO MAKING INVESTMENTS TO CLOSE TODAY'S EQUITY AND
OPPORTUNITY GAPS.

CONGRESS DOUBLED THE NIH'S TOTAL FUNDING, NOT ONCE BUT
TWICE IN LESS THAN 20 YEARS. CONGRESS CAN AND SHOULD DO THE
SAME TO REDRESS LONGSTANDING UNDERFUNDING FOR HBCUs AND
STUDENTS OF COLOR. WE CAN START BY DOUBLING THE PELL GRANT
AND TRIPLING TITLE III.

NOW, IN ADDITION TO THE WIDESPREAD, BUT SOMETIMES
SHALLOW SUPPORT FOR HBCUs, I WOULD SUGGEST THERE IS A
SECOND REASON FOR THE PERSISTENCE OF THE HBCU PARADOX.

EVERYONE HERE TODAY WOULD READILY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT
OUTRIGHT RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND THE FORCES OF JIM CROW
SEGREGATION THAT HBCUs LONG CONFRONTED HAVE FADED.

BUT AT THE SAME TIME, WE ALSO KNOW THAT THE GAP
BETWEEN PUBLIC RHETORIC AND PRIVATE REALITY ON HBCUS PERSISTS
BECAUSE SUBTLER FORMS OF DISPARATE AND UNFAIR TREATMENT OF

HBCUs BY GOVERNMENT, CORPORATIONS, PHILANTHROPISTS,
LENDERS, AND ACCREDITORS STILL CONTINUE.

JUST WITHIN THE LAST MONTH, WE HAVE SEEN TWO GLARING
EXAMPLES OF THE DISPARATE TREATMENT OF HBCUs. SOME OF YOU
MAY HAVE SEEN THE DEVASTATING STUDY BY THE STUDENT
BORROWER PROTECTION CENTER ON EDUCATIONAL REDLINING.

THAT STUDY FOUND THAT IF YOU TOOK TWO IDENTICAL
APPLICANTS AND HAD THEM APPLY TO REFINANCE A \$30,000 STUDENT
LOAN, THE TERMS OF THE LOAN DIFFERED DRAMATICALLY BASED

SOLELY—SOLELY--ON WHETHER THE APPLICANT GRADUATED FROM AN HBCU OR FROM A NON-MSI.

IN THEIR STUDY OF LENDING PRACTICES, BOTH HYPOTHETICAL GRADUATES WERE 24 YEARS OLD, RESIDENTS OF NEW YORK CITY, HAD BEEN EMPLOYED BY THEIR CURRENT EMPLOYER FOR FIVE MONTHS, EARNED \$50,000 A YEAR AS A SALARIED ANALYST, AND HAD \$5,000 IN SAVINGS. THE *ONLY* DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO LOAN APPLICANTS IS THAT ONE GRADUATED FROM HOWARD UNIVERISTY AND THE OTHER GRADUATED FROM NYU.

NOW, CONSIDER THIS—THE HOWARD GRADUATE—AND HOWARD IS KNOWN AS A JEWEL AND CAPSTONE OF THE HBCU SYSTEM—STILL SUFFERED FROM WHAT THE STUDY CALLED, QUOTE, “THE HBCU PENALTY.” JUST AS TELLING, THIS AUDIT OF LENDING PRACTICES WAS ABLE TO ACHIEVE A RARE FEAT: IT NOT ONLY BROUGHT TO LIGHT DISPARATE LENDING PRACTICES BUT WAS ABLE TO ACTUALLY QUANTIFY THE AMOUNT OF THE HBCU PENALTY.

COMPARED TO AN IDENTICAL NYU GRADUATE, IT TURNS OUT THAT THE HOWARD GRADUATE WAS CHARGED \$3,500 MORE TO REPAY THEIR LOAN AND ABOUT \$725 MORE JUST IN ORIGINATION

FEEES. THAT IS A SHAMEFUL EXAMPLE OF THE DISPARATE TREATMENT OF HBCU GRADUATES. OUR GRADUATES ARE BEING PUNISHED FOR NOTHING MORE THAN THE FACT THAT THEY GRADUATED FROM AN HBCU.

NOW THERE WAS ANOTHER STORY LAST MONTH THAT HIGHLIGHTED THE INEQUITABLE TREATMENT OF HBCUS, IN THIS CASE BY PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS.

I'M REFERRING TO A STORY THAT RAN ON NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO UNDER THE HEADLINE, "LARGEST GIFT IN HOWARD UNIVERSITY HISTORY SPARKS CONVERSATION ABOUT HBCU DONATIONS."

THINK ABOUT THAT FOR A MOMENT. WHY WOULD THE LARGEST GIFT IN THE HISTORY OF HOWARD, QUOTE "SPARK A CONVERSATION ABOUT HBCUs"? THE ANSWER, I THINK, IS KNOWN TO EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM.

AS WONDERFUL AS MY FRIENDS' BRUCE AND MARTHA KARSH AND THEIR KARSH FAMILY FOUNDATION'S, \$10 MILLION DONATION TO

HOWARD WAS, AND AS INVALUABLE AS IT WILL BE TO
STRENGTHENING HOWARD'S STEM PROGRAMS, \$10 MILLION IS STILL A
MODEST FRACTION OF THE MAJOR GIFTS THAT GO TO NON-MINORITY
SERVING STATE SCHOOLS AND TO SELECTIVE PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES ON
A REGULAR BASIS.

AS THE NPR STORY NOTED, THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND AT
COLLEGE PARK RECEIVED A \$219 MILLION GIFT IN THE LAST DECADE.
NEARBY GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY RECEIVED A GIFT OF \$100
MILLION. THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON RECEIVED \$500 MILLION TO

BUILD A STEM-FOCUSED CAMPUS IN EUGENE. SUNY-BINGHAMTON
JUST RECEIVED A \$60 MILLION GIFT TO BUILD A BASEBALL STADIUM.

I ASK AGAIN: WHY CAN'T THE KARSH FAMILY'S FOUNDATION GIFT
TO HOWARD BE THE NORM, INSTEAD OF A LONELY EXCEPTION? I
KNOW THAT MY FRIENDS, BRUCE AND MARTHA KARSH, SEE THEIR
HBCU GIFT AS A BEGINNING FOR THEM, NOT A ONE-OFF. AND, THEY
ALSO WANT THEIR GIFT TO INSPIRE OTHERS TO INVEST IN HBCUs.

AND UNFORTUNATELY, ONCE AGAIN, THE HBCU PENALTY, THE HBCU DISPARITY IN PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT, CAN BE QUANTIFIED.

THE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY HAS CALCULATED THAT MINORITY-SERVING, FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS RECEIVE ABOUT \$865 PER STUDENT IN PRIVATE GIFTS AND INVESTMENT RETURN. BY CONTRAST, NON-MSI INSTITUTIONS RECEIVE NEARLY EIGHT TIMES AS MUCH PER STUDENT IN PRIVATE GIFTS AND INVESTMENT RETURN, OR JUST UNDER \$6,600 PER STUDENT.

THE DISPARATE TREATMENT OF HBCUs BY PHILANTHROPY

SIMILARLY ECHOES THROUGHOUT THE HALLWAYS AND OFFICES OF FEDERAL AGENCIES IN WASHINGTON, DC. IT IS TRUE THAT ALL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES EXPERIENCED A DECLINE IN FEDERAL FUNDING PER STUDENT BETWEEN 2003 AND 2015. BUT AS A JOINT STUDY BY UNCF AND ACE FOUND LAST YEAR, FOR MOST INSTITUTIONS THE DECLINE IN FEDERAL SUPPORT WAS RELATIVELY MODEST, AMOUNTING TO A FEW HUNDRED DOLLARS PER STUDENT.

NOT SO FOR PRIVATE HBCUS. PRIVATE HBCUs--AND PRIVATE HBCUS ALONE—HAVE EXPERIENCED A DEVASTATING DECLINE IN

FEDERAL SUPPORT. IN 2003, FEDERAL FUNDING PER FULL-TIME STUDENT AT PRIVATE HBCUs CAME TO \$4,300 PER STUDENT. BY 2015, FEDERAL FUNDING HAD PLUMMETTED TO \$2,500 PER STUDENT—A DROP OF 42 PERCENT.

NOW, THANKS TO CONGRESS, WE HAVE MADE GAINS STARTING IN 2017, BUT NO ONE SHOULD BE SURPRISED THAT AN UNEVEN PLAYING FIELD YIELDS UNDERFUNDED COLLEGES.

NOW, VIRTUALLY EVERYONE ACKNOWLEDGES THAT HBCUs HAVE HISTORICALLY BEEN UNDERFUNDED. BUT IT WOULD SURPRISE MANY

AMERICANS OUTSIDE OF THIS ROOM TO LEARN THAT HBCUs
CONTINUE TO BE INEQUITABLY FUNDED BY GOVERNMENT AND
PHILANTHROPY TODAY, AND CONTINUE TO FACE DISCRIMINATION BY
LENDERS.

I WOULD ADD THAT SOME REGIONAL ACCREDITORS CONTINUE
TO TREAT HBCUs FAR MORE HARSHLY THAN OTHER INSTITUTIONS. IT IS
TELLING THAT AFTER LAST YEAR'S COLLEGE ADMISSIONS SCANDAL LED
TO AN FBI INVESTIGATION AND SENT PEOPLE TO JAIL, NOT A SINGLE
REGIONAL ACCREDITOR OPENED AN INVESTIGATION INTO

INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY AT SCHOOLS WHERE RICH PARENTS
CHEATED AND BRIBED TO GET THEIR KIDS INTO COLLEGE.

YOU DIDN'T HEAR A PEEP FROM REGIONAL ACCREDITORS. NOT A
PEEP. BUT SOME OF THOSE SAME ACCREDITORS HAVE LEVIED STIFF
SANCTIONS AND PUT HBCUs ON PROBATION FOR FAR LESS SERIOUS
OFFENSES OR EVEN ON THE BASIS OF A LOCAL NEWS STORY.

JAMES BALDWIN ONCE OBSERVED ABOUT HISTORY THAT "THE
PAST IS ALL THAT MAKES THE PRESENT COHERENT." WHEN WE LOOK

AT THE UNFAIR AND DISPARATE TREATMENT OF HBCUs TODAY, WE SEE
HOW PAINFULLY RIGHT HE WAS.

NOW THE FACTS I'VE OUTLINED ABOUT THE HBCU PARADOX—
THE SOMETIMES SUPERFICIAL COMMITMENT TO HBCUs, THE
DISPARATE TREATMENT OF HBCUS—WON'T COME AS A SURPRISE TO
THOSE OF YOU IN THE ROOM TODAY.

BUT DON'T BE FOOLED—THOSE FACTS WOULD COME AS A
SURPRISE TO MANY AMERICANS, AND EVEN TO SOME LAWMAKERS.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE PUBLIC NARRATIVE TODAY ABOUT HBCUs IS
OFTEN QUITE DIFFERENT THAN THE FACTS I'VE JUST OUTLINED.

AS CONGRESSWOMAN ALMA ADAMS PUT IT SO WELL LAST YEAR,
WE ARE FED UP WITH PEOPLE ASKING, "DO WE STILL NEED HBCUs?"
TOO OFTEN, THE TIRED NARRATIVE OF TODAY IS OF THE PURPORTED
DEMISE OF HBCUs—AND NOT OF THE NEED TO SERIOUSLY INVEST IN
HBCUs TO CORRECT HISTORIC AND PERSISTENT INEQUALITY.

IT DOESN'T HELP, FRANKLY, WHEN THOSE IN POWER SAY THAT
HBCUs WERE, QUOTE, "GOING OUT, AND WE SAVED THEM."

WE APPRECIATE THAT PRESIDENT TRUMP HAS SIGNED
LEGISLATION THAT WAS NOT INCLUDED IN HIS BUDGETS, LIKE THE
FUTURE ACT AND A BOOST IN THE AMOUNT OF TITLE III AND PELL
GRANT AWARDS. WE APPRECIATE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION
SUPPORTED LOAN FORGIVENESS FOR HBCUs AFFECTED BY HURRICANE
KATRINA AND THE RESTORATION OF SUMMER PELL GRANTS, AND THE
NEW DEFERMENT AT THE HBCU CAPITAL FINANCE PROGRAM.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAVE ALSO OBJECTED TO THE
ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE SUPPLEMENTAL EQUAL

OPPORTUNITY GRANTS AND SLASH THE FEDERAL WORK STUDY PROGRAM AND TRIO. THOSE PROGRAMS HELP OUR STUDENTS ACCESS COLLEGE AND STAY IN SCHOOL. AND WE ARE THANKFUL THAT CONGRESS HAS NOT ONLY MAINTAINED, BUT IN MANY CASES STRENGTHENED THOSE PROGRAMS.

WITH ALL THAT SAID, AND WITH ALL DUE RESPECT TO THE PRESIDENT, IT BEARS EMPHASIZING THAT HBCUs DID NOT NEED TO BE, QUOTE, "SAVED." AND WE WEREN'T GOING OUT OF BUSINESS. RUMORS OF THE DEMISE OF HBCUs ARE NOT ONLY GREATLY EXAGGERATED, BUT THEY ARE FALSE.

THE TRUTH IS THAT THE LATEST DATA SHOW THAT HBCUs,
UNLIKE MANY SEGMENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SAW ENROLLMENT
RISE BY NEARLY TWO PERCENT IN 2017. IN FACT, DURING THE PAST
THREE YEARS, ROUGHLY ONE OUT OF THREE HBCUs HAVE HAD RECORD
ENROLLMENTS. THOSE ARE ACHIEVEMENTS WE CELEBRATE. AND LET
ME TELL YOU RIGHT HERE AND NOW, WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO
CLOSE A SINGLE HBCU.

NOW, HOW CAN WE REPLACE A FALSE NARRATIVE WITH THE
GENUINE STORYLINE OF HBCUs? WE ARE EDUCATORS. AND A KEY PART

OF OUR MISSION IS TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC—TO BOTH CELEBRATE
OUR SUCCESSES AND TO SPEAK TO THE REAL NEEDS OF HBCUs IF WE
ARE TO SUCCEED IN CLOSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS.

NO ONE KNOWS THE STORY OF HBCUs BETTER THAN YOU. THAT
STORY IS OF THE STUDENTS WHOSE LIVES YOU HAVE CHANGED. THOSE
STORIES HAVE THE POWER TO DISPEL MYTHS AND OPEN EYES FOR THE
MILLIONS OF AMERICANS WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN TO AN HBCU
CAMPUS—WHO HAVE NOT SEEN FIRSTHAND THE CAREFULLY
TAILORED CARE, SUPPORT, AND INSTRUCTION THAT HBCUs PROVIDE,
OR THE ANCHOR THAT THEY FORM IN MANY BLACK COMMUNITIES.

WE CANNOT STOP EDUCATING THE PUBLIC UNTIL EVERY YOUNG
BOY AND GIRL HAS THE SAME CHANCE TO PURSUE THEIR DREAMS AS
YOU AND I DID AT A PLACE THAT NURTURES, WELCOMES, AND
URGENTLY WANTS THEM TO BE THERE AND SUCCEED.

AND AS WE PURSUE THAT MISSION, I SEE MORE THAN A
GLIMMER OF HOPE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME—EVEN MORE
REASONS FOR OPTIMISM. THE TIDE OF PUBLIC OPINION AT THE
VOTING BOOTH AND IN CONGRESS IS SHIFTING, AND FINALLY

BEGINNING TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE NEED FOR SWEEPING
INVESTMENTS IN HBCUs.

IT IS STRIKING THAT NEARLY EVERY PRESIDENTIAL DEMOCRATIC
CANDIDATE TODAY HAS AN HBCU PLATFORM. AND IN MOST CASES,
THEIR PROPOSALS ARE FAR MORE SWEEPING THAN IN THE PAST.

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN HAS PLEDGED TO INVEST \$70 BILLION IN
HBCUS AND OTHER MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTIONS. MAYOR PETE
AND SENATOR WARREN HAVE EACH PLEDGED \$50 BILLION
INVESTMENTS IN MSIs. SENATOR SANDERS HAS PROMISED TO MAKE

ALL HBCUs TUITION-FREE—AND TO INVEST \$15 BILLION IN
INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRAINING PROGRAMS. MAYOR BLOOMBERG
HAS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN THAT REWARDS HBCUs FOR DOING
WHAT THEY DO BEST—EDUCATING THOSE FROM UNDERSERVED
BACKGROUNDS.

SO FAR, WE HAVE YET TO SEE THOSE KINDS OF COMMITMENTS
FROM THE TRUMP CAMPAIGN OR IN THE PRESIDENT'S 2021 BUDGET.
BUT WE KNOW THE PRESIDENT WANTS THE BRAGGING RIGHTS FOR
HAVING DONE MORE THAN ANY OTHER PRESIDENT TO SUPPORT
HBCUs.

THERE IS STILL TIME FOR HIM TO CLAIM THAT MANTLE. WE HOPE
IN COMING MONTHS HE WILL PROPOSE INVESTMENTS IN HBCUs THAT
RIVAL OR EXCEED THOSE OF HIS DEMOCRATIC OPPONENTS.

SO, I'LL CLOSE BY SAYING THAT THE STATE OF HBCUs IS
STRONGER TODAY, BUT IT COULD AND SHOULD BE EVEN STRONGER.

LET'S MAKE THIS YEAR THE YEAR THAT WE START TO END THE
HBCU PARADOX AND MATCH RHETORIC WITH REALITY.

LET'S MAKE THIS YEAR THE YEAR WHEN INEQUITABLE

TREATMENT OF HBCUs IS NAMED AND SHAMED.

LET'S MAKE THIS YEAR THE YEAR WHERE FALSE NARRATIVES

ABOUT HBCUs WITHER AND DIE.

AND LET'S MAKE THIS YEAR THE YEAR WHEN CONGRESS AND THE

AMERICAN PEOPLE BEGIN TO TRULY COMMIT TO INVESTING IN HBCUs

TO END OUR NATION'S EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY GAPS.

WE THANK ALL OF THE LAWMAKERS AND HBCU PRESIDENTS
HERE TODAY THAT ARE BRINGING US A STEP CLOSER TO FULFILLING
THAT MISSION. AND WE REAFFIRM OUR MOTTO: A MIND IS A TERRIBLE
THING TO WASTE, BUT A WONDERFUL THING TO INVEST IN. LET THIS
YEAR BE THE YEAR WHEN AMERICA JOINS US IN MAKING THAT
INVESTMENT. THANK YOU.