



United Negro College Fund, Inc.
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June 21, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Defense Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Ranking Member
Defense Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
122 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
Defense Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
H-405, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Ranking Member
Defense Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran, Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Members Durbin and Visclosky:

On behalf of UNCF (United Negro College Fund) and the 37 private historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) we represent, I am writing once again to encourage your strong support for additional investments for the HBCU/Minority Institutions (HBCU/MI) program funded within the U.S. Department of Defense, Research, Development, Test and Evaluation account. As you know, this program not only bolsters our country's national security, but also strengthens the scientific and technological infrastructure of HBCUs in support of defense priorities.

We are grateful for your leadership on the FY 2017 Department of Defense Appropriations Act, which appropriated \$33 million, a \$10 million increase to the FY 2017 Department of Defense request, for the HBCU/MI program. This investment continues an essential federal partnership with the nation's HBCUs. However, the President's proposed FY 2018 funding level of \$26 million for the HBCU/MI program insufficiently supports the need for diversifying our nation's military research base. To that end, UNCF and our member institutions urge you to increase the FY 2018 appropriation for this program to \$40 million.

The HBCU/MI program is uniquely designed to bring diversity and expertise to our nation's military by building a pipeline of highly trained students and faculty at HBCUs, Predominately Black Institutions (PBIs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Asian American and Pacific Islander Alaskan Native-Serving Institutions. The

program provides tremendous value for the students and the nation. Through research, training and collaborative activities in scientific and engineering disciplines, the HBCU/MI program enables faculty and students to work directly with military laboratories in technical areas of interest to the Department of Defense, such as cyber security.

Since FY 2010, the Department of Defense has awarded more than 275 research and equipment grants to HBCUs and MSIs. The program encourages the participation of small minority schools, as well as large minority research institutions, including Jackson State University (Mississippi), New Jersey City University (New Jersey), Chicago State University (Illinois), Tuskegee University (Alabama) and Fort Lewis College (Colorado)—which received competitive grants for national security-related research projects. Plans are underway to increase the number of Centers of Excellence in autonomy, cyber security and research data analysis. In addition, the HBCU/MI program created STEM Prep projects at HBCUs and MSIs so that more students of color can graduate with the requisite skills to work in critical defense related fields.

HBCUs and MSIs already have compiled an impeccable record of producing graduates majoring in STEM disciplines. For example, HBCUs are among the top 10 institutions where African American science and engineering PhDs earn bachelor's degrees. By supporting research, training, mentoring and other activities that help students enter the workforce in STEM fields, the HBCU/MI Program is helping America meet the global security challenges that face us today.

We thank you for your consideration of this request and your recognition of the important contributions that HBCUs and MSIs are making to our national defense research, development and workforce needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael L. Lomax". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "L".

Michael L. Lomax, Ph.D.
President & CEO