

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0919

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

February 2, 2022

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney
Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Maloney:

Today, I write you to express my deep concern following recent reports of a spike in targeted bomb threats against Historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) across the United States on the first day of Black History Month.¹ As someone who attended a HBCU, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), I have great reverence and fondness for America's HBCUs. Any threat to these historic institutions cannot stand without severe consequences.

As of Tuesday, over a dozen HBCUs received threats—these schools include the following:²

- Howard University;
- Alcorn State University;
- Coppin State University;
- Edward Waters University;
- Fort Valley State University;
- The University of the District of Columbia;
- Morgan State University;
- Kentucky State University;
- Xavier University of Louisiana;
- Philander Smith College;
- Arkansas Baptist College;
- Mississippi Valley State University; and
- Jackson State University

These sick and twisted threats against predominantly Black institutions undermine the momentous progress of our nation regarding race relations and expose the dwindling, yet unfortunate, reality of the lingering racism and discrimination that still exists in our country.

As the son of a single mother who put me through private education to better my academic future—the ability of all Americans to access a world-class education of their choice is sacred. Any attempt to threaten, intimidate, or inflict harm on innocent college students prohibits not only Black students and staff, but all people, from securing their fundamental right to safety, adequate education, and their overall wellbeing.

¹ Erin Doherty, *Over a Dozen HBCUs Get Bomb Threats on First Day of Black History Month*, AXIOS (Feb. 1, 2022), <https://www.axios.com/hbcu-bomb-threats-black-history-month-163b6c3c-5d97-4d8c-9b61-1f72e5301f92.html>.

² *Id.*

As a Black man and a Member of Congress who sits on the House Oversight and Reform Committee, I'm requesting that you hold a hearing regarding these disturbing threats against America's HBCUs. I hope that this meeting will not turn down the divisive and unproductive rabbit hole of partisan politics, but a fact-finding mission as to the extent of these bomb threats, how to hold those accountable, and most importantly, how to prevent these attacks from succeeding and happening again in the future.

As we celebrate Black History Month and honor the intrepid spirit and contributions of Black Americans, the success of my community would not be possible without the creation and preservation of HBCUs. In 2022, more than 250,000 Americans attend an HBCU, and there are 100 HBCUs located in 19 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands—including four in my home state of Florida.³ While no Florida university was on the list of targeted schools, I want to do everything in my power to ensure that no other school will endure the fear of dying from a domestic terror attack while attending school.

While anxieties are high in the HBCU community, I respectfully ask that you promptly consider this request for a hearing. I hope you'll call members of the highest echelons in the Department of Justice (DOJ), including but not limited to the Attorney General of the United States, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Secretary of Homeland Security. It is incumbent upon this committee to join in a bipartisan manner to investigate these recent events and give peace of mind to all educational institutions. For too often, the agencies responsible for the security of our nation drop the ball on credible information or threats, which sadly results in devastating tragedies like the Parkland High School shooting or the shooting at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston. In our oversight capacity, we must ensure that the agencies tasked with keeping us safe are working diligently to prevent any attempt by domestic or international actors to impose harm, intimidation, or death to any member of our society, especially students.

Sincerely,



Byron Donalds
Member of Congress

cc:

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable James Clyburn
Majority Whip
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform

³ E.g. *Bethune Cookman University, Edward Waters College, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, and Florida Memorial University.*