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Congress of the United States
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COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

November 4, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Today, we write you to express our deep concern following recent reports and mixed messaging coming from the White House and Congressional leadership surrounding scrapping billions of dollars from historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).¹ As you and your Democrat colleagues continue to negotiate your stalled socialist spending spree, it is troubling to see that Democrats have considered slashing funding to such valued educational institutions. As it stands today, the "Build Back Better" plan will cost the American taxpayer north of six trillion dollars. This blank check proposal aims to expand the federal government's role by grossly pumping trillions of dollars the nation does not have for entitlement programs intended on growing dependence on the government. This massive package includes trillions for climate chasers, free college, free childcare, tax incentives for the rich, and the list goes on. Your party's commitment to so-called human infrastructure seems to have phased out dollars that received bipartisan support, funding for HBCUs, and in favor of radical spending priorities intended on fundamentally changing America.

Throughout history, HBCUs have provided millions of Black Americans with an opportunity to control their educational success and overall prosperity which was previously denied to them. Under the previous administration and Congress, President Trump signed a bipartisan bill that permanently provided more than \$250 million a year to HBCUs and dozens of other institutions serving minority students.² Despite many ideological differences, members of the HBCU community, including the president and CEO of the United Negro College Fund, praised President Trump for his leadership in restoring \$255 million in annual funding incorporated the FUTURE Act. President Trump famously stated that HBCUs "never had a better champion in the White House,"³ and we would agree. Many Black Americans are troubled that your party seems to have sold out the Black community, once again, to appease the socialist wish list spending proposals of Bernie Sanders, AOC, and Ilhan Omar.

While HBCUs only account for 3% of all higher education institutions, more than 20% of Black college graduates receive their degree from a HBCU. Many of these degrees focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), including 31% of biology and math degrees. In addition to providing this historical funding, President Trump's first action was to move the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities from the Department of Education into the White House, a

¹ Alyse Messmer, *HBCU Funding Falls From \$45 Billion to \$2 Billion Under Latest Biden Spending Plan*, NEWSWEEK (Oct. 5, 2021, 4:11 PM), <https://www.newsweek.com/hbcu-funding-falls-45-billion-2-billion-under-latest-biden-spending-plan-1635870>.

² Collin Binkley, *Trump Signs Bill Restoring Funding for Black Colleges*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (Dec. 19, 2019), <https://apnews.com/article/bills-donald-trump-politics-c4834e48841d97c5a93312b1bf75302a>.

³ *Id.*

move long supported by HBCUs. Under the Trump administration, federal funding for HBCUs increased by more than \$100 million and nearly 20% throughout his tenure.⁴

As Republican members of Congress who either proudly attended an HBCU or represent a congressional district home to a HBCU, we seek your immediate attention and reassurance that your administration and fellow Democrats on Capitol Hill will not starve our HBCUs following the bountiful progress left to you by former President Trump. While we strongly oppose your radical leftist domestic agenda that will bankrupt our nation and future generations, it is essential to prioritize funding for these institutions.

Sincerely,



Byron Donalds
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Dr. Miguel Cardona, Secretary
United States Department of Education

The Honorable Robert C. Scott, Chairman
House Committee on Education and Labor

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader

⁴ Lauren Camera, *Trump to HBCU Leaders: No One Has Done More for You Than Me*, U.S. NEWS (Sept. 10, 2019, 5:46 PM), <https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2019-09-10/trump-to-hbcu-leaders-no-one-has-done-more-for-you-than-me>.