

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 6, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-220, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

Thank you for your work to pass stimulus legislation to provide relief to our nation's families, workforce, and students. As you negotiate additional legislation to address the ongoing public health and economic crisis, we urge your support of additional funding for minority serving education institutions, especially Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs).

We appreciate efforts to appropriate funding through the CARES Act and HEROES Act for those Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) designated as historically black colleges and universities and minority serving institutions. However, we believe that additional funding would provide much-needed emergency relief to Illinois students from economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in the midst of the ongoing pandemic.

Illinois is home to Chicago State University (CSU), the only U.S. Department of Education designated public four-year PBI in Illinois, and one of a few in the Midwest. Through PBIs, like CSU, our nation's higher education system is able to foster conditions for equity by supporting and educating students — especially African-American and low-income students — to enhance economic mobility. Therefore, we are pleased that the CARES Act included \$1 billion to support minority serving institutions, however, this amount only scratches the surface of what is required to meet the needs of their students.

The CARES Act allotted \$18 million for the Strengthening PBIs Program, of which CSU was allotted just under \$150,000. This is concerning as PBI students, like those who attend CSU, have proven to benefit from added financial flexibility and assistance to continue their education. In light of this, CSU has provided students with housing during the Illinois Stay at Home Order and covered the cost of student devices for online coursework. However, after accounting for the financial support from the CARES Act, CSU estimates a remaining \$8.4 million deficit in the 2019–2020 academic year due to COVID-19-related costs.

PBIs, as defined in the Higher Education Act of 1965, have a student population that is comprised of 50 percent low-income individuals or first-generation students. In addition, the Higher Education Act ensures that PBIs maintain lower expenditure levels to enable the acceptance of

high percentages of students within these categories. Therefore, in an effort to limit already widening gaps between low- and high-income students, we urge your support of PBIs as they prepare for the uncertainties of the upcoming academic year.

Sincerely,



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

/s/
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

/s/
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

/s/
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

/s/
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

/s/
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

/s/
Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

/s/
Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress

/s/
Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress

/s/
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

/s/
Jesús “Chuy” García
Member of Congress