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**HACU**  
H I S P A N I C  
A S S O C I A T I O N  
O F C O L L E G E S &  
U N I V E R S I T I E S

December 9, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Republican Leader McConnell:

On behalf of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), the undersigned Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) presidents and chancellors urge the Senate to join the House of Representatives by swiftly passing the Build Back Better (BBB) Act. The BBB Act would provide significant and much-needed funding to HSIs that have experienced decades of neglect and inequitable federal funding.

Although HSIs account for 17% of U.S. colleges and universities, they educate more than two-thirds of the estimated 3.8 million Hispanic college students in the U.S. They also enroll 41.3% of Asian, 35.6% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, 26.2% of multi-racial, 24.2% of Black students, and 15% of white students. HSIs also enroll 33% of Pell recipients in the United States. HSIs are preparing America's diverse workforce to keep our nation competitive and prosperous.

In fact, HSIs increased from 293 in 2009 to 569 in 2019 educating 5.24 million underserved students. HSIs are consistently asked to do more with less. The first Congressional HSI appropriation in Fiscal Year (FY) 1995 was a meager \$12 million for more than 125 HSIs. As the number of HSIs has climbed rapidly, federal funding has been paltry over the years and amounted to a mere \$314.8 million in FY21, including \$221.6 in discretionary funds, compared to \$1.01 billion in discretionary funding for 101 HBCUs that enroll less than 300,000 students. Additionally, HBCUs were forgiven \$1.3 billion in capital financing loans guaranteed by the federal government earlier this year, a program that HSIs lack. We urge you to cure this appalling federal funding inequity of HSIs in the BBB Act.

In addition to the persistent federal underfunding, COVID-19 has exacerbated the financial needs of HSIs: delayed deferred maintenance, access to broadband, classroom facilities enhancements, and much needed wrap-around student services, particularly health services. As the pandemic lingers on, the funding needs of HSIs will persist and become more critical. Federal investments are necessary if we want to strengthen our workforce by enhancing educational attainment. The funds in the BBB Act are necessary investments that will greatly assist the students that our institutions educate and serve.

Investing in HSIs is an investment in the success of the future workforce of the United States. Hispanics accounted for more than 51% of all the U.S. population growth between 2010 and 2020, and the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the Hispanic population will grow by 93.5% from 2016 to 2060. HACU respectfully asks you to lead your colleagues in Congress in strengthening HSIs as national priority. Your leadership and advocacy for HSIs would not only benefit Hispanic students but all students attending HSIs. The insidious inequities in funding HSIs will, indeed, negatively impact our country and its pressing needs for a diverse, skilled, and well-educated workforce.

Thank you in advance for your leadership and support of fair and equitable funding for the nation's largest higher education cohort of underserved students. HACU and our nation's HSI leaders stand ready to work with you and serve as a resource. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [antonio.flores@hacu.net](mailto:antonio.flores@hacu.net) or at 210-576-3214.

Respectfully,

Antonio R. Flores  
HACU President and CEO

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cc: The Honorable Ben Ray Lujan, U.S. Senator  
The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto, U.S. Senator  
The Honorable Bob Menendez, U.S. Senator  
The Honorable Alex Padilla, U.S. Senator

Co-signed by the following HSI CEOs:

**Arizona**

President Rey Rivera  
Estrella Mountain Community College

Interim President Amy Diaz  
GateWay Community College

President Dennis J. Tyner  
Ottawa University Arizona

President Robert C. Robbins  
University of Arizona

**California**

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Azusa Pacific University

President Soraya M. Coley  
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President Lynnette Zelezny  
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President Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval  
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President Eduardo M. Ochoa  
California State University, Monterey Bay

President Tomas Morales  
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California State University, Stanislaus

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Mount Saint Mary's University

President Randy C. Frisch  
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President Monica Green  
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Pacific Oaks College

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**Wisconsin**

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**All Signatories Below Signed on Behalf of Institutions**

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