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June 29, 2022

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Chair  
Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bobby Scott  
Chair  
Committee on Education & Labor  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Virginia Foxx  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Education & Labor  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Improving Minority Participation and Careers in Telecommunications (IMPACT) Act**

Dear Chair Cantwell, Chair Scott, Ranking Member Wicker, and Ranking Member Foxx:

I am writing on behalf of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) and the 559 Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), located in 29 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. As the Conference Committee convenes to reconcile the America COMPETES Act (H.R. 4521) and the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act (USICA) (S. 1260), I urge you to ensure that it includes an open and competitive grant program for Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) on the same basis. I respectfully request that the Minimum Allocation to Certain Entities—Section 2509 (USICA) be stricken from the Conference bill.

However, if the Conference Committee still prefers to use the minimum allocation, we urge you to use an equitable formula that considers the number of institutions and students they educate and serve to ensure the use of objective criteria for a fair allocation of funds.

HSIs play a critical role in educating and training the most diverse and underserved communities. HSIs enroll two-thirds of the estimated 3.8 million Hispanic undergraduate and graduate students in American higher education, many of whom are first-generation students and come from low-income families. HSIs also enroll 41.4% of Asian, 35.2% of Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander, 23.8% of Black students, 21.1% of American Indian & Alaska Native, and 16.4% of non-Hispanic White students in the U.S. Additionally, while HSIs only account for 16% of all colleges and universities, they enroll 31% of Pell recipients.

As the nation continues to rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic and looks to create a stronger, more diverse, and more competitive 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce, it is critical that federal investments strengthen our workforce by enhancing the education infrastructure of HSIs to pave a path of successes and opportunities for our Hispanic students.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, HSIs lacked sufficient funding and resources for up-to-date and “smart” technology equipped classrooms, libraries, and other telecommunications infrastructure needs. Currently, many HSI classrooms are out of date, libraries lack essential digital assets and holdings, and buildings are not equipped with the necessary broadband technology to enhance the learning experience for all students. Now, these needs are compounded and even more urgent.

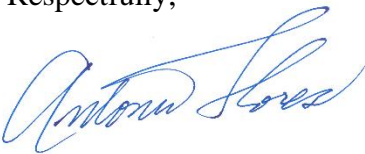
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We are at a critical juncture to invest in America's future. Training the nation's next generation for telecommunications careers is critical to both our future economic competitiveness and national security. The IMPACT Act will help hundreds of HSIs that lack the necessary infrastructure funding to invest in classrooms and laboratory space, deferred maintenance projects, and hire and retain faculty, students, and research-related staff to advance academic programs and facilities. It is imperative that the Conference Committee ensure that the IMPACT Act remains open and competitive for HSIs to compete equally for these desperately needed dollars.

As the Conference Committee considers historical investments to ensure American competitiveness, we urge you to support an open and inclusive funding process to ensure that programs for all MSIs do not unfairly undermine and underfund HSIs.

Thank you for considering this request. HACU is ready to work with you and to 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  
President and CEO

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
The Honorable Raul Ruiz  
The Honorable Ben Ray Lujan  
The Honorable Joaquin Castro  
The Honorable Henry Cuellar  
The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
The Honorable Adriano Espaillat  
The Honorable Jenniffer Gonzalez-Colon  
The Honorable Raul M. Grijalva  
The Honorable Teresa Leger Fernandez  
The Honorable Bob Menendez  
The Honorable Alex Padilla