

EDUCATION (EDU)

Resolution EDU-24-15

CLOSING THE FUNDING GAP BETWEEN LAND-GRANT INSTITUTIONS

WHEREAS, on September 18, 2023, the United States Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona, and the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Thomas Vilsack, sent letters to sixteen governors, including Governor Bill Lee of Tennessee, detailing the over \$12 billion-dollar disparity in funding between land-grant Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and their non-HBCU land grant peers in their states;

WHEREAS, under the Second Morrill Act of 1890, states choosing to open a second land-grant university to serve Black students were required to provide an equitable distribution of state funds between their 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions;

WHEREAS, unequitable appropriated funding of the 1890 institutions in the states ranges from \$172 million to \$2.1 billion, causing severe financial gaps, and these funds could have supported vital and much-needed infrastructure and student services and would have better positioned the recipient universities to compete for grants to increase educational opportunity for students;

WHEREAS, the Alabama A&M University, the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, the Fort Valley State University, the Kentucky State University, the Southern University and A&M College, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, the Alcorn State University, the Lincoln University, the Langston University, the South Carolina State University, the Tennessee State University, the Prairie View A&M University, the Virginia State University, the West Virginia State University, and the North Carolina A&T State University are all affected;

WHEREAS, for example institutions such as the Tennessee State University and Lincoln University, the 1890 land-grant institution in Tennessee and Missouri, has not been able to advance in ways that are on par with the University of Missouri and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the original Morrill Act of 1862 land-grant institution in Missouri and Tennessee, due in large part to unbalanced funding;

WHEREAS, the longstanding and ongoing underinvestment in Land-Grant HBCU Institutions disadvantages the students, faculty, and community that the institution serves;

WHEREAS, utilizing data from the National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Survey from 1987 to 2020, the State of Tennessee has underfunded Tennessee State University by \$2,147,784,704 over the past thirty years alone;

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WHEREAS, using the same data, Lincoln University has been underfunded by \$361 million;

WHEREAS, these funds could have supported infrastructure and student services at HBCUs and would have better positioned the university to compete for research grants; and

WHEREAS, it is vital to all HBCUs and our economic future that we are committed to ensuring that opportunity is equally distributed to our land-grant universities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) strongly urges all states to equitably distribute funding to land grant institutions and end this funding gap entirely in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials as appropriate.

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Sponsored by: Rep. Larry Miller (TN)

Policy Committee: Education (EDU)