

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2020

The Honorable Sanford Bishop Jr.
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jose Serrano
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice Science
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice Science
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Ed
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Ed
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Bishop, Serrano, and DeLauro and Ranking Members Fortenberry, Aderholt, and Cole:

As you consider appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, we respectfully request that the House Appropriations Committee consider the following requests for several programs that support the 550 Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) across 25 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.

Hispanic students continue to be at a disadvantage as only 13 percent of the Hispanic population 25 and older holds a bachelor's degree and a mere 5.3 percent of the same population holds an advanced degree¹. As our labor markets continue to evolve, it is imperative that we prepare Hispanic students to enter the labor forces that increasingly demands higher levels of education.

HSIs play a crucial role in addressing the education gap, enrolling 66 percent of the 3.6 million Hispanic college students and 24 percent of all college students in non-profit postsecondary institutions. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, projections indicate that 74 percent of all the new workers joining the American labor force in the current decade will be Hispanic. Despite serving such a vital role in educating our next generation of leaders, HSIs continue to be underfunded, receiving only 68 cents for every dollar going to all colleges and universities annually, per student, across all federal funding sources. We respectfully request that you include \$170 million for the Developing HSI program (Title V, Part A) and \$35 million for the Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (Title V, Part B) program, which support Hispanic students in undergraduate and graduate programs, respectively.

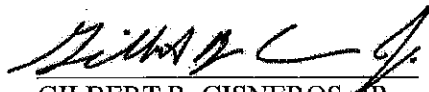
¹ <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2018/demo/education-attainment/cps-detailed-tables.html>

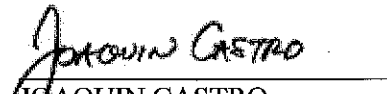
To address a portion of the funding shortage for HSIs, the 2008 Farm Bill included a new federal designation, Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs) for HSIs offering degree programs in agriculture and related areas. The legislation authorized new programs for HSACUs to strengthen their capacity to serve Hispanic students and other low-income students pursuing degrees in agriculture and related fields. There are 140 HSACUs across the United States that are driving innovative solutions for the nation's agricultural challenges. We respectfully request that you include \$25 million for NIFA's HSI Education Grants, \$20 million for the HSACU Equity grants, \$10 million for the HSACU Institutional Capacity Building grants, and \$10 million for HSACU Basic and Applied Research grants.

Additionally, the American COMPETES Act, created an HSI program at the National Science Foundation (NSF). The HSI program is designed to increase the recruitment, retention and graduation rates of Hispanic students pursuing degrees in science, mathematics, engineering or technology and to increase the quality of STEM education. We respectfully request that you appropriate \$55 million for the NSF HSI Program.

Given the state of our nation's economy and with rising enrollments at community colleges and Minority-Serving Institutions, federal investments in these programs are vital to build a competitive labor force to meet the challenges of tomorrow. Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,


GILBERT R. CISNEROS, JR.
Member of Congress


JOAQUIN CASTRO
Member of Congress

Member of Congress