



**STRENGTHENING**  
**GEORGIA'S**  
**HBCUs**

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U.S. SENATE

## ***Emergency Pandemic Support***

- Direct federal financial support to cover HBCU budget shortfalls

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## ***Tuition Affordability***

- Make public and private HBCUs debt-free
- Strengthen and expand the Pell Grant system

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## ***Facilities & Technology***

- Finance HBCUs with grants instead of debt
- Establish public health clinics near HBCUs
- Upgrade HBCU tech and comms infrastructure

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## ***Vital Program Expansion***

- Create 200 New Centers of Excellence at HBCUs that create, strengthen, and expand programs in crucial fields

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## ***Endowment Growth***

- Increase public funding available to grow HBCU endowments

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## ***Morris Brown Accreditation***

- Return Morris Brown College to full accreditation to revive access to federal funds

**In the Senate I will champion HBCUs to strengthen these gems of America’s higher education system.**

Georgia is home to ten HBCUs and the Atlanta University Center (“AUC”) Consortium, making Georgia a national HBCU headquarters.

Georgia’s HBCUs are: Albany State University, Fort Valley State University, Savannah State University, Clark Atlanta University, Interdenominational Theological Center, Morehouse College and Morehouse School of Medicine, Morris Brown College, Paine College, and Spelman College.

HBCUs are vital ladders to opportunity for Black Americans — and these institutions train leaders, entrepreneurs, scientists, doctors, theologians, and academics who make vital contributions to American society.

HBCUs face devastating hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. *These vital institutions need immediate support to avoid long-lasting damage.*

**At the strategic level, HBCUs need and deserve deepened long-term public investment. Following a series of meetings with HBCU administrators, faculty, and alumni leaders this summer, it is clear these long-term policy priorities must include:**

**Tuition Affordability**

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**Facilities & Technology**

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**Endowment growth**

**Morris Brown Accreditation**

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**Program expansion in vital fields to train STEM professionals, health care workers, and educators**

To develop this plan I convened a series of meetings with Presidents, Vice Presidents, staff, and alumni leaders from Albany State University, Fort Valley State University, Interdenominational Theological Center, Morris Brown College, Clark Atlanta University, Spelman College and the Atlanta University Center Consortium to listen and understand the immediate and long-term needs of these institutions.

This paper will serve as a framework for my legislative approach to supporting Georgia's HBCUs and HBCUs nationwide when I represent Georgia in the United States Senate.

### **EMERGENCY PANDEMIC SUPPORT**

COVID-19's impact on institutions of higher education has been devastating.

Schools are grappling with how to provide high-quality, substantive education and instruction without the necessary resources and tools while the institutions, their faculties, and students are under acute financial stress.

The CARES Act provided a measure of support that helped HCBUs in spring and summer, but that legislation was not designed to support adaptation for an entire additional school year. The pandemic continues to severely disrupt operations, challenge financial stability, and impose hardship on students and their families.

While the federal government has failed, and continues to fail, to contain the virus or provide sufficient direct support to working families, many HBCU students and their families are struggling with illness or face severe economic hardship, are unable to make tuition payments, and do not have the access to technology and broadband internet at home necessary to support remote instruction.

HBCUs need additional direct relief, now.

HBCUs need an additional wave of funding to assist students who face sudden financial hardship, purchase technology necessary for remote education, and train professors in virtual instruction. Schools have already spent hundreds of thousands of dollars out of their limited reserves, but it is not enough.

**Overdue supplemental pandemic relief legislation must include additional direct support for HBCUs to cover these shortfalls.**

## TUITION AFFORDABILITY

HBCU leaders identified student financial hardship, tuition affordability, and crushing student debt burdens for students and alumni as among the most significant threats to HBCU viability and higher education access in the Black community.

[87 percent of Black](#) students have to take on debt to attend college and a [Wall Street Journal](#) report finds “alumni at HBCUs take on 32% more debt than graduates at other public or nonprofit four-year schools.”

The opportunity to receive an education at an HBCU must not be conditioned on unmanageable and exploitive student loan debt.

**That’s why in the Senate I’ll work to make four-year degrees at our public colleges 100% debt-free — and I’ll propose *both public and private HBCUs are included in that debt-free college promise.***

I will also work to strengthen the Pell Grant system. More than [70% of HBCU students are eligible for Pell Grants](#) to attend college. **We need to strengthen and expand the Pell Grant system to make college affordable for all Americans.**

## FACILITIES & TECHNOLOGY

HBCU leaders report that deferred facilities maintenance, lack of funds for vital upgrades and construction, and outdated technological infrastructure are all key challenges. Federal support can be transformative to address them.

A 2018 report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that at least 46 percent of HBCU buildings [need repairs](#) or replacements. Deferred maintenance and insufficient resources for facilities upgrades and construction reduce the quality of the student experience and undermine institutional growth. These long-term obligations will divert significant resources from educational programming and could drive up tuition.

The Historically Black College and University Capital Financing Program, first authorized by Congress in 1992, was designed to help HBCUs make critical investments in facilities and infrastructure. Despite its good intentions, the program has imposed unsustainable debt on many HBCUs.

**Congress should re-envision the HBCU Capital Financing Program as a grant program, rather than a debt-based program. These are public investments with a tangible return on investment for these vital institutions and their students, surrounding communities, and the country. Rather than imposing debt on HBCUs to support vital maintenance and construction, the federal government should cut through red tape and simply offer grants.**

Congress should also consider HBCUs as opportune sites for the construction of other critical infrastructure, such as health clinics, which will enhance health and quality of life both for students and surrounding communities.

**I'll introduce legislation to expand the U.S. Public Health Service so it can recruit, train, and deploy more medical teams to clinics across Georgia and the nation — and we should build some of those clinics on or near our state's HBCUs so they can serve the broader public and on-campus communities.**

**Finally, the Federal government should invest in upgrades for HBCUs' technological and communications infrastructure. Outdated hardware, inadequate networking, and lack of student access to laptops and tablets are unnecessary impediments to effective instruction, research, and study.**

## **PROGRAM EXPANSION IN VITAL FIELDS TO TRAIN STEM PROFESSIONALS, HEALTH CARE WORKERS, AND EDUCATORS**

I will support funding to expand HBCU degree programs in vital professions where national workforce growth and increased Black professional participation are vital such as STEM, health care, and education.

HBCUs already graduate [one-third](#) of the nation's prospective Black teachers. But a shortage of Black educators nationwide means many Black children are deprived of Black educators and mentors.

According to the [National Bureau of Economic Research](#), **“Black students who are exposed to one Black teacher by third grade were 13 percent more likely to enroll in college. Those who had two Black teachers were 32 percent more likely to enroll in college.”**

Similarly, today, less than [6 percent of U.S. medical school graduates](#) are Black. Spelman College in Atlanta already graduates the most Black women with STEM PhDs in the country. With public investment, HBCUs can grow their capacity to train and graduate health care professionals in nursing, occupational therapy, biomedical engineering, and other health-science fields.

**That’s why in the U.S. Senate I will support Vice President Joe Biden’s plan to create 200 [new Centers of Excellence](#) at HBCUs that focus on creating, strengthening, and expanding programs in the most-needed fields like Education and STEM.**

This should include funding for the impressive research institutions already housed at Georgia HBCUs, like the Cancer Center at Clark Atlanta and the cardiovascular center at Morehouse College.

### **ENDOWMENT GROWTH**

Many public and private universities across the country depend on deep, well-funded endowments to invest in strategic growth and ensure financial stability and sustainability.

In [most cases](#), “HBCU endowments are a little more than half the size of median endowments at similar schools that are non-HBCUs.”

**In the U.S. Senate, I will work to increase public funding available to grow HBCU endowments and ensure the Department of Education provides adequate information and outreach to HBCUs about how to access those resources.**

### **BUILDING GENERATIONAL WEALTH FOR BLACK FAMILIES**

Alongside public investment, private sector wealth creation and generation in the Black community will generate increased investment in HBCUs.

Slow and uneven wealth generation in the Black community reduces the philanthropic resources available for HBCUs. Racial inequities in economics and finance therefore deprive HBCUs of long-term investment.

Black families are less likely to own a home or have substantial savings and are more likely to carry debt.

A broader agenda to support Black economic empowerment, access to capital, entrepreneurship, and consumer protection will help build generational wealth in the Black community and in turn increase resources that flow to HBCUs through philanthropic endeavors based in the Black community.

### **MORRIS BROWN COLLEGE ACCREDITATION**

Schools like Morris Brown College are prized communities in Georgia. We cannot let bureaucracy and funding stand in the way of accreditation.

**In the U.S. Senate I will work closely with Morris Brown College leadership in support of their efforts to regain full accreditation so their students have access to all available [federal funding](#).**