

H.R. 6772: THE “HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (HBCUs) HOMELAND SECURITY PARTNERSHIPS ACT”

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FACT SHEET

- In February 2017, President Trump established an initiative to provide equitable opportunities for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to participate in Federal programs.¹ The White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, established by Executive Order 13779, noted that the Nation’s more than 100 HBCUs “have made, and continue to make, extraordinary contributions to the general welfare and prosperity of our country”.²
- Pursuant to the Executive Order, in May 2018, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS or Department) submitted a plan to the Department of Education describing its efforts to strengthen the capacity of HBCUs to participate in applicable Federal programs and initiatives.³
- In its annual plan to the Department of Education, DHS, *the third largest Executive Department*, outlined its priorities for strengthening the capacity of HBCUs. These priorities include improving outreach and engagement with HBCUs and increasing the pipeline of talent through internships. DHS identified seminars, job fairs, training and technical assistance as means for achieving its priorities. However, DHS did not include a specific strategy or measurable goals for accountability.
- The DHS annual plan projected spending about \$755,000 of its \$70 billion operating budget in fiscal year 2018 on HBCU training and development efforts.⁴ Further, just one DHS component identified investments in cooperative agreement with HBCUs.⁵
- DHS’s plan revealed that HBCU-targeted programs such as the United States Coast Guard’s College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (a scholarship program available to juniors and seniors in college) are not being fully-utilized. In fact, the U.S. Coast Guard reported a 63.82% decrease in applications

¹ Executive Order 13779, Presidential Executive Order on The White House Initiative to Promote Excellence and Innovation at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (February 28, 2017), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/presidential-executive-order-white-house-initiative-promote-excellence-innovation-historically-black-colleges-universities/>

² *Id.*

³ Department of Homeland Security, *Annual Plan on Executive Agency Actions to Strengthen the Capacity of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to compete for Federal and Private Sector Opportunities for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018* (May 29, 2018).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

submitted by HBCU students in fiscal year 2018 at the time of reporting.⁶ This is particularly troubling given the U.S. Coast Guard Academy’s historic diversity challenges, as reflected in there being just four people (2 percent) in the 2017 graduating class of 195 self-identifying as Black or African-American.⁷

- The “Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) Homeland Security Partnerships Act,” sponsored by Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, seeks to strengthen partnerships between DHS and HBCUs and minority-serving institutions.
- Under this legislation, DHS would be required to issue a strategy obtaining yearly goals for enhancing partnerships with HBCUs and minority-serving institutions. This legislation also requires DHS to monitor and report on implementation of the strategy thereby ensuring the Department’s progress in providing contracting, research and development, and career opportunities to HBCUs and minority-serving institutions.

THE “HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (HBCUS) HOMELAND SECURITY PARTNERSHIPS ACT”

SECTION BY SECTION

Sec. 1. SHORT TITLE. The “Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) Homeland Security Partnerships Act.”

Sec. 2. DEPARTMENT-WIDE STRATEGY FOR ENHANCED PARTNERSHIPS WITH HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTIONS.

Requires the Secretary of Homeland Security (the DHS Secretary), acting through the Under Secretary for Strategy, Policy, and Plans, to issue a Department of Homeland Security (DHS)-wide strategy, not later than 90 days after the date of enactment, to enhance partnerships with historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and minority-serving institutions (MSIs). The Strategy is to include yearly goals through fiscal year 2023.

This section also requires the head of each DHS component to develop an action plan to implement the Department-wide strategy and monitor and report on implementation progress.

Sec. 3. ENHANCEMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS.

Requires the DHS Under Secretary for Science and Technology to seek to enhance partnerships with HBCUs and MSIs by encouraging such institutions to participate in research, development, test, and evaluation

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Chris Soto, *U.S. Coast Guard Academy blindly white* (June 9, 2017), <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/oped/bs-ed-coast-guard-diversity-20170610-story.html>.

activities; facilitate partnerships between HBCUs and MSIs and private sector stakeholders, national laboratories and other academic institutions; and distribute funds through grants, cooperative agreement, and contracts.

Sec. 4. CAREER OPPORTUNITIES PARTNERSHIPS.

Requires the Secretary, acting through the DHS Chief Human Capital Officer, to provide a list of internship, fellowship, scholarship, and recruitment opportunities for students and recent graduates of HBCUs and MSIs, not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

Sec. 5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR 8(A) PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS.

Requires, not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to publish eligibility criteria on how HBCUs and MSIs may qualify to participate in Federal acquisitions under section 8(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(a); Public Law 85-536). Upon publication, the DHS Secretary is required to disseminate information to HBCUs and MSIs on (1) how to establish such eligibility, and (2) current and future opportunities to participate in section 8(a) Federal acquisitions.

Sec. 6. ANNUAL REPORT.

Not later than December 31, 2019, and annually thereafter through 2025, the DHS Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report that includes:

- (a) A description of how the Department is partnering with HBCUs and MSIs under the programs referred to in sections 3 and 5, and how such programs have helped such colleges, universities, and institutions participate in acquisitions with the Department.
- (b) A summary of outreach efforts to HBCUs and MSIs, and identification of any Department programs and initiatives in which such colleges, universities, and institutions are under-represented among institutions of higher education.
- (c) A description of the status of efforts made by the Department pursuant to sections 2 and 4, including—
 - (1) Department-wide goals pursuant to the Department-wide strategy in section 2, and the status of efforts to implement action plans throughout the Department to carry out such strategy; and
 - (2) participation rates in each internship, fellowship, scholarship, and recruitment opportunity referred to in section 4.

Sec. 7. DEFINITIONS.

- (1) Provides definitions for “Department”, “historically Black colleges and universities” “institution of higher education”, “minority-serving institutions”, and “Secretary”.