

Testimony of Dr. Glenda Glover
Before House Committee on Education and Labor
October 6, 2021

Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Murphy, members of the Committee, and all present. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today. I am Glenda Glover. I serve as President of Tennessee State University. Tennessee State is a comprehensive, urban, land-grant HBCU with over 8,000 students, offering degrees at the bachelor, masters, and doctoral levels, and is located in Nashville, Tennessee.

I am completing my ninth year as President of Tennessee State University and hold the distinction of currently being the longest serving female President of an HBCU.

A word about my background. I have a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from the university that I now lead, Tennessee State University, a Master of Business Administration in Accounting from Clark Atlanta University- another HBCU, a Doctor of Philosophy in Business, second area of Economics from George Washington University, and a Doctor of Jurisprudence from Georgetown University Law Center. I am also a Certified Public Accountant and I am licensed to practice law.

In addition to my education, I have broad experience in the world of finance and economics, and have served on corporate boards of three publicly traded companies. I serve as Lead Director on the board of Pinnacle Financial Partners, Pinnacle Bank.

Thank you for allowing this dialogue on the record regarding HBCUs. Our country cannot reach its goals without strong, viable, sustainable HBCUs - goals related to closing the education gap, the wealth and economic gap, the health goals and sustainability goals.

HBCUs have proven that they are changing the college landscape, and provide a significant return on investment. HBCUs have made enormous contributions, and have achieved in spite of continuous challenges and limited resources. For example, HBCUs account for just 3% of colleges in the United States, but produce:

22% of bachelor degrees earned by African Americans

25% of African Americans with STEM degrees

50% of African American public school teachers

60% of African American Health professionals

50% of African American lawyers

50% of African American doctors

83% of African American judges

24% of Ph.Ds earned each year by African Americans are conferred by 24 HBCUs

More than 40% of the members the Congressional Black Caucus attended HBCUs. And the Vice President of the United States attended an HBCU.

These achievements were earned despite the fact that funding has been disproportional, resources have been limited, and endowments on average are 70% less than the average endowments of predominantly White institutions. HBCUs have consistently had to do more with less. And in spite of finding a way to survive, the lack of funding has prevented many HBCUs from excelling at an even higher level.

So we are pleased to be here today to present this value proposition for HBCUs and describe the funding needs of HBCUs. The Build Back Better Act is a game changer that proposes to invest in HBCUs, and reflects this Administration understanding of how important these investments are in helping HBCUs continue their central role in resolving many of the challenges that threaten the general welfare and prosperity of our country.

We want to thank Congress for your support last year as you made emergency funds available to assist higher education institutions, in particular HBCUs, through the COVID crisis. This emergency funding was significant because it assisted students as they faced this sudden crisis.

Students had to return to their homes and communities, and could not engage in online education because of poor infrastructure. Many did not have the proper broadband, had limited to no connectivity, and did not have ipads and laptops that were workable. Students had cell phones, but with cell phones students were only able to do limited classwork. Students could log on to zoom and participate in classes, but could not prepare papers or perform the proper modeling required for course work. With the stimulus funding, we were able to provide technology devices, and assist students financially. Colleges and universities also used the funding to upgrade the technology infrastructure to support online learning.

These are critical times as college presidents discuss their needs, challenges, and best practices. As president of Tennessee State University, I saw first-hand the difficulties that students experience. Students not only struggle to get into college, but to obtain funds to enroll while they encountered the new challenge of pivoting to online learning. Experience as a college president is

both rewarding and challenging. When I see a student come on our campus and attend school, it is rewarding. When I see a student leave for lack of funding, it is a challenge and is disappointing.

At TSU and other HBCUs, we saw it more closely through the lens of COVID. COVID exposed many of the disparities and weaknesses in our educational system. The emergency funds were sorely needed and appreciated. There continues to be a looming disparity in the educational gap.

And the HBCU Capital Financing (loan forgiveness) program was extraordinary. Eliminating the debt at 45 HBCUs was phenomenal and most appreciative. The emergency stimulus helped tremendously. And we thank you.

Today we ask you to continue that financial support of HBCUs, not just on the emergency basis as the CARES Act and other emergency funding has done in the past. We ask you to assist HBCUs as they seek to grow, develop, become more competitive and sustainable for years to come.

HBCUs have stood the test of time and managed to succeed in spite of the difficulties. Now, we need your assistance - your financial assistance. We seek funding. HBCUs seek to become more competitive, and sustainable for years to come.

HBCUs were founded to educate the newly freed slaves. HBCUs have fulfilled this mission with limited resources, discrimination in funding, and inadequate facilities. HBCUs have played a unique role in higher education. Our history includes taking marginalized students and producing scholars who make meaningful contributions. But in spite of all the achievements and

contributions, we as a country still have not closed the gaps that continue to plague the prosperity and success of African Americans.

We ask you to help close the funding gap. HBCUs were denied state funding for decades, and experienced historical underfunding as well as diverted funding. Public institutions suffered through a lack of state funding. This has caused HBCU students to face increased hurdles. According to UNCF, 72% of Black students take on debt as they seek their degrees, compared to 56% of their white peers. Moreover, nearly 74% of HBCU students are Pell Grant eligible, 52% are first-generation scholars, and 94% receive some type of financial aid. Some students have no support at all.

The state of affairs has been equally as grim for land grant institutions. When matching funds were required, many times the states did not provide the proper match. This type of short changing with matching funds has continued for generations. As an example, the states of Maryland and Tennessee are taking the lead in obtaining state funds that are in arrears. In Tennessee, a bipartisan legislative committee determined earlier this year that the State did not provide matching land grant funding and other funding going back to the 1950s, in an amount up to \$544 million. In Maryland, the state recently finalized a \$577 million settlement to the four HBCUs in the state for underfunding.

HBCUs are just as relevant today and as needed as they were when the first HBCU was founded almost 185 years ago. HBCUs were founded to educate the newly freed slaves and give them the opportunity for a better life. Established with a mission to educate Black students, HBCUs welcome all students and are purpose driven.

But the tragedy is that after almost 185 years, we still find ourselves trying to find the funds to help fulfill that mission – to educate and to assist in providing financial aid for primarily disadvantaged students, most of whom are African American. HBCUs are mission based institutions, not based on demographics or any racially based criteria. Additionally, after nearly 185 years, HBCUs still have a preponderance of first generation college students, compared to peer institutions of third, fourth, and fifth generation college students. In spite of all we have done over 185 years, there is still disparity in education, employment, and earnings. We ask you to address the historic disparities in funding and invest in HBCUs. This funding gap has existed for decades.

Though HBCUs may be underfunded, they are on the front lines of educating students who need access to the transformative power of higher education. We ask you to invest in the institutions that need it the most and invest in the students they serve.

It is important for HBCUs to receive funding in four specific areas.

- Infrastructure and deferred maintenance
- Technology
- New academic programs
- Research

1. Infrastructure and deferred maintenance.

We ask you to invest in the infrastructure and in the extensive backlog of deferred maintenance on HBCU campuses. A majority of the HBCUs are over 100 years old. Buildings are crumbling.

Facilities are deteriorating and need upgrading. In some of our schools, when it rains heavily, it often rains on the inside also. Our students should not have to learn in this type of environment. Some of the Presidents have shared with me that on their campuses, deferred maintenance is as much as \$100 million or \$200 million. It's around \$300 million on Tennessee State's campus. Campuses need new residence facilities. Many colleges and universities still have community restrooms and showers, and are competing with ultra-modern facilities on campuses of our peers.

2. Technology. We ask you to invest in technology at HBCUs including advanced computing capabilities and networks, which would allow for more efficient operations. This would break down barriers in education, significantly broaden education, and helps student improve their skill set and enhance their learning experience. The increased educational delivery methods will improve classroom technology as well as the performance of students, and help students prepare or their future careers.

3. New Academic Programs and Expansion. New programs are needed for HBCUs to remain competitive. New programs are costly as new faculty, marketing initiatives, and infrastructure requests are needed. Competitive programs allow innovation at HBCUs as they meet the growing workforce demand.

There are several areas where new programs could enhance HBCUs. Programs are needed in business and engineering. More than ever we need strong business schools and strong engineering schools. Programs need to be enhanced to better develop analytical and technical skill sets. HBCUs must expand global managerial talent which allows students to compete to a changing market place, and allow students to become leading contributors in our global economy. Programs in agriculture will enhance HBCUs in areas such as food production, food security, and food distribution. Agriculture has long been considered the backbone of our economic system. HBCUs

can make substantial contributions to the economy through agricultural sciences. Programs are also needed in the health profession. The COVID pandemic has revealed that not only do we need more physicians and health care experts, but we need more racially, ethnically and culturally diverse doctors who will serve in their communities. There are four (4) medical schools at HBCUs, and over thirty (30) nursing schools at HBCUs. These should be enhanced to provide the curriculum and instruction necessary for greater student success.

4. Research. HBCUs ask you to continue the conversation on establishing the 200 Centers of Excellence to significantly improve the research capabilities of HBCUs. HBCUs seek these centers to serve as research incubators that will nurture undergraduate students and provide graduate fellowships and other opportunities for underserved populations. Research is a key determining factor of major advances in crucial areas such as health care, food security, economics, energy, national security and several others. We need a national investment in research at HBCUs. HBCUs can help to solve research problems in our country.

In the area of academics, the Carnegie Classification of Higher Education has designated 3 research categories that indicate the level in which doctoral degree granting universities engage in research activity. The highest is Research 1 category – R1, then Research 2 category – R2, and finally Research 3 category – R3. HBCUs are striving to make a greater contribution to the research taking place in this country. There is not a single HBCU in the highest research category- R1. However, there are eleven (11) HBCUs in the R2 category. HBCUs need assistance in moving up in this research category. We have others in the third category trying to move to R2.

Resources are severely needed to enable HBCUs to have funding with which to continue to prepare and support our students. The additional funding will allow HBCUs to be more competitive, and operate on the same level as students from well-resourced, predominantly White institutions,

Finally, we are often asked the question and others ponder it in their minds, why do we still need HBCUs. That's the wrong question. The question should be how did these colleges and universities have so little and produce so much, and how can their model be used by other institutions to advance our great country. That's the question to be asked.

At HBCUs we see Black excellence at its best. We ask you strengthen HBCUs, support the students they serve, and to allow HBCUs to fully benefit the national economy. We ask you to make a much needed investments in HBCUs, and to address historic discrimination, provide resources for students of color, and put HBCUs on equal footing with majority institutions.

We are asking Congress to right this wrong. It is never too late to do what's right.