

A VISION FOR BLACK LIVES:

POLICY DEMANDS FOR BLACK POWER, FREEDOM, & JUSTICE

Protection and Increased Funding for Black Institutions including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Black Media, and Cultural, Political and Social Formations

What is the problem?

- HBCUs play a crucial role in providing access to higher educational opportunities for many Black people. HBCUs represent only three percent of the nation's four-year higher education institutions, but graduate 22 percent of Black people who earn bachelor's degrees. These schools disproportionately enroll low-income, first-generation, and academically underprepared college students. More than 75 percent of students at HBCUs rely on Pell Grants and nearly 13 percent rely on these grants and loans to meet their college expenses. HBCUs are uniquely equipped to support these students with successful outcomes. In fact, public four-year HBCUs are the only institutions that consistently approach or achieve parity in enrollment and degree completion in the South.
- However, these institutions lack the sufficient funding they need from the federal government, states, and private donors to survive and thrive. [A 2013 report by the Association of Public Land-grant Universities \(APLU\)](#) found that, from 2010 to 2012, states were failing to meet the required 100 percent match of federal funding to HBCUs. In recent years, state public HBCUs in South Carolina and Maryland have sued their respective states for receiving less funding and inequitable program offerings compared to the states' predominantly white institutions. Moreover, HBCU endowments are one-eighth of the average size of those of historically white colleges and universities. Underfunding prevents these universities from competing for students, improving infrastructure, and increasing their offerings.
- Black owned media organizations are struggling to survive. There are only about 200 black newspapers, only 4 major black magazines (2 of which were recently [sold](#)), very few black radio programs, and [no black owned and operated full-power television stations](#). There is very little black television news programming, black people only make up about 10 percent of TV newsroom staff and 4.7 percent of journalists. While Black digital media has been successful and Black people have carved out spaces on Facebook and Twitter, many times the online news is on mainstream websites with a black-aimed vertical. Protecting and promoting Black-owned and operated media is critical. These organizations provide a unique and authentic perspective that reflects the diversity of views of the Black community and should be supported.
- Black political, cultural and social organizations, especially those engaged in activism, face threats of surveillance, police violence, and arrest. For example, in August 2015, [The Intercept](#) released documents demonstrating government surveillance of people

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engaged in public protest or online social media activity concerning #BlackLivesMatter. These documents demonstrated that the Department of Homeland Security and Federal Bureau of Investigation tracked public protests concerning police accountability and the deaths of Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, and Eric Garner. Other [reports](#) indicate geospatial mapping of protests, emails tracking protesters' movements, and emails between government officials discussing the dates, times, and locations of planned protest activities. Further [reports](#) reveal that law enforcement at various levels use digital tools, such as Media Sonar and Digital Stakeout, to monitor online social media activity of people who use the #BlackLivesMatter and related hashtags. Additionally, Black Lives Matter protests have been met with militarized police responses and the use of crowd-control weapons. In just the past couple of weeks [hundreds](#) have been [arrested](#) across the country during [protests](#) in response to [police killings of unarmed black men](#).

What does this solution do?

- We seek complete open access for all to free public university, college and technical education programs (including technology, trade and agricultural) as well as full-funding for lifelong learning programs that support communities and families. This applies to nearly half of all HBCUs that are public institutions. We also seek the forgiveness of all federal student loans. Policies shall apply to all and should focus on outreach to communities historically denied access to education, including undocumented, incarcerated, and formerly incarcerated people. By protecting and supporting these institutions, we can provide a meaningful pathway to higher education and social mobility.
- Reauthorize the 1965 Higher Education Act with increased funding for both public and private HBCUs.
- Increase federal and state funding for HBCUs' building maintenance and upgrades, operational budget, staffing (with incentives to hire and retain), research, and efforts to expand graduate and post-secondary courses and programming.
- Provide institutional support to Black media
- Protect and promote the First Amendment rights of Black Cultural, Political and Social Formations.

Federal Action:

- Target: U.S. Congress
- Process: Pass a bill to provide \$165 billion (in 2014 the DOE provided \$30 billion in grant aid, \$36 billion in tax cuts and \$99 billion in federal student loans) per year to states to eliminate undergraduate tuition and fees at all public universities and colleges, and assist states to cover all related living costs for students. The bill would also increase work study programs and employment opportunities for students and expand eligibility to

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undocumented students and incarcerated students. For more information, see the one-pager on [Reparations for Systemic Denial of Access to High Quality Educational Opportunities](#)

- Target: U.S. Congress
- Process: Reauthorize the 1965 Higher Education Act with increased funding for both public and private HBCUs. Pass a bill to update Title III funding formulas and increase discretionary spending for HBCUs to at least \$267 million. The bill would also increase investment and and expand federal grant opportunities through the Capital Financing Program, HBCU Historic Preservation Fund Grant Program, and educational programs targeted at HBCUs.
- Target: Executive
- Process: The White House Initiative on HBCUs should allocate federal funding to support HBCUs' operational budget and to strengthen operational processes, administrative capacity, student support programs, research, and collective bargaining costs (salary benefits and increases), and fundamental needs. The White House Initiative on HBCUs can also develop events and programming to provide skills to faculty, staff and administration to improve institutional capacity.
- Target: Federal Communications Commission (especially the Diversity Advisory Committee)
- Process: Develop programming and partnerships to support Black-owned and operated media organizations.
- Target: Attorney General, Executive
- Process: End surveillance of black political organizations and an audit of any surveillance that has occurred.

State Action:

- Target: State Legislature
- Process: Guarantee one-to-one matching of federal funding for 1890 land-grant universities. In most states, this decision is made by state legislatures, but in some states the Governor makes this decision.
- Target: State Attorney General
- Process: End surveillance of black political organizations and an audit of any surveillance that has occurred.



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How does this solution address the specific needs of some of the most marginalized Black people?

- HBCUs offer support and opportunities for low-income, first-generation, and academically underprepared students who may struggle or are denied opportunities in other educational environments.

Resources:

- [Comprehensive Funding Proposals for Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#)
- United Negro College Fund: [Public Policy Priorities for 114th Congress](#)
- Thurgood Marshall College Fund: [FY 2016 Budget Priorities](#)
- [National Center for Education Statistics Data on HBCUs](#)
- [White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#)
- [Why the U.S. College Landscape Still Needs HBCUs](#)
- [Black News Media Fact Sheet](#)
- [Black media has a plan to stay relevant as mainstream journalists encroach](#)

Organizations Currently Working on Policy:

- Thurgood Marshall College Fund
- United Negro College Fund
- National Association for Equal Opportunity

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