



September 9, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)ⁱ, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA)ⁱⁱ, and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC)ⁱⁱⁱ, we write to express our support for the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act, introduced in the Senate as S. 1279 and in the House as H.R. 2486. As the three largest and most inclusive national organizations representing American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students, tribal colleges and universities (TCUs), and tribal governments and leaders, we urge Congress to take action before September 30, 2019 to ensure that tribal communities do not lose access to critically needed education funding.

Since FY2010, the Strengthening Institutions – Tribal Colleges and Universities program (HEA Title III Part F) has supported the Tribal College Movement in addressing the higher education needs of AI/AN students. Through this program, TCUs collectively receive \$30 million in annual mandatory funding. TCUs have used this funding for student support services, faculty development, academic curriculum and courses to strengthen our tribal nations, library services, classroom construction or modernization, and many other important education activities. Without these funds, TCUs will be forced to reduce services, jeopardizing student completion and success.

The FUTURE Act will sustain mandatory funding for two more years (FY 2021-2022) at current levels for Tribal Colleges and Universities (\$30 million), Alaska Native-Serving Institutions (\$15 million), and Native American-Serving non-Tribal Institutions (\$5 million). For timely distribution of funding and to avoid any disruptions of services at TCUs, Congress must pass the FUTURE Act before funding expires at the end of the current fiscal year on September 30, 2019.

To emphasize the need for Congress to enact this vital legislation quickly, NCAI's membership passed Resolution [#REN-19-038](#) "to extend the HEA Title III-Part F Strengthening Institutions-Tribal Colleges and Universities program at the current mandatory level of \$30 million per year for two years, while working to secure permanent funding of the program." Accordingly, we strongly support the FUTURE Act and urge you to support this time-sensitive legislation to ensure the continuity of operations at institutions of higher education in tribal communities, including all 37 TCUs.

Please contact us if you have any questions or if additional information is needed. Thank you for your continued support of TCUs and AI/AN students across the nation.

Sincerely,



Kevin J. Allis
Chief Executive Officer
National Congress of American Indians



Carrie L. Billy
President & CEO
American Indian Higher Education Consortium



Diana Cournoyer
Executive Director
National Indian Education Association

ⁱ Founded in 1944, the National Congress of American Indians is the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization in the country. NCAI advocates on behalf of tribal governments and communities, promoting strong tribal-federal government-to-government policies, and promoting a better understanding among the general public regarding American Indian and Alaska Native governments, people, and rights. For more information visit www.ncai.org.

ⁱⁱ NIEA is the nation's most inclusive advocacy organization advancing comprehensive culture-based educational opportunities for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Formed by Native educators in 1969 to encourage a national discourse on education, NIEA adheres to the organization's founding principles- to convene educators to explore ways to improve schools and the educational systems serving Native children; to promote the maintenance and continued development of language and cultural programs; and to develop and implement strategies for influencing local, state, and federal policy and decision makers. For more information visit www.niea.org.

ⁱⁱⁱ The American Indian Higher Education Consortium, a 501(c)(3) organization governed by a board of directors composed of the presidents of the accredited United States-based TCUs, is celebrating 45 years as the collective spirit and unifying voice of our nation's 37 TCUs—a unique community of tribally and federally chartered institutions working to strengthen tribal nations and make a lasting difference in the lives of American Indians and Alaska Natives. For more information visit www.aihec.org.