

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 69

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 14, 2022

The Senate Higher Education Committee reports favorably Senate Resolution No. 69.

This resolution supports House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 70, which condemns the recent threats of violence against historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and urges Congress to pass the resolution.

HBCUs were created throughout the 19th and 20th centuries to provide higher educational opportunities to Black Americans in a time when discriminatory practices often prevented Black Americans from pursuing higher education at other institutions. HBCUs are a symbol of independence and resilience for the Black community and continue to play an important role in the education of Black Americans, as well as other minority and marginalized communities. In 2020, enrollment at HBCUs totaled more than 275,000 students, and HBCUs continuously produce a significant share of the country's Black leaders, innovators and artists, including Vice President Kamala Harris, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Toni Morrison.

In January and February of 2022, at least 30 HBCUs received bomb threats, including Howard University and Spellman College, which received the threats on multiple occasions. Historically, bombings were a common tactic used during the Civil Rights Movement to target Black institutions and terrorize members of the Black community, and resulted in significant loss of life. The recent bomb threats recall the bombings of the Civil Rights Movement and seek to instill fear and anxiety in the students, faculty, and staff of HBCUs. These bomb threats increase anxiety, jeopardize the educational environment, and obstruct educational opportunities.

The United States has a responsibility to protect citizens targeted by race-related hate crimes and to prevent the continued perpetration of these crimes. On February 7, 2022, the United States House of Representatives introduced HCR 70, condemning the threats of violence against HBCUs and reaffirming the federal government's commitment to combat violence against students, faculty, and staff of HBCUs. The Senate of the State of New Jersey supports this resolution and urges Congress to pass HCR 70.