

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 3149

To encourage the growth of research partnerships between historically Black colleges and universities and Federal agencies to advance development in sub-Saharan Africa.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 26, 2023

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. WICKER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To encourage the growth of research partnerships between historically Black colleges and universities and Federal agencies to advance development in sub-Saharan Africa.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “HBCU Africa Partnerships Act”.

6 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
7 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Findings.
- Sec. 3. Sense of Congress.

Sec. 4. Purposes.

Sec. 5. Definitions.

Sec. 6. Expanding partnerships between relevant departments and agencies and historically Black colleges and universities.

Sec. 7. Expanding exchange programming for scholars from Sub-Saharan Africa.

Sec. 8. Communications and outreach programming.

Sec. 9. Congressional briefing.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) High-quality education is central to eco-
4 nomic prosperity and social well-being in the United
5 States and around the world.

6 (2) Historically Black colleges and universities
7 and other minority serving institutions play a critical
8 role in ensuring that students of all races,
9 ethnicities, and backgrounds have access to high-
10 quality educational opportunities.

11 (3) HBCUs have a long and rich history in edu-
12 cating and facilitating relationships between mem-
13 bers of the African diaspora in the United States
14 and throughout the world, from Europe and the
15 Western Hemisphere to Asia and the African con-
16 tinent.

17 (4) HBCU alumni have made important con-
18 tributions to relations between the United States
19 and Africa in the areas of—

20 (A) democracy and political governance;

21 (B) food and agricultural security;

1 (C) education and human capital;

2 (D) youth development; and

3 (E) public health infrastructure.

4 (5) The United States Government has
5 partnered with HBCUs and other United States col-
6 leges and universities, including through—

7 (A) the Department of State’s educational
8 and cultural exchange programs;

9 (B) the Young African Leaders Initiative,
10 which supports United States Government ef-
11 forts to invest in the next generation of African
12 leaders; and

13 (C) USAID’s Minority Serving Partnership
14 Initiative to facilitate research partnerships and
15 engagements with minority-serving institutions,
16 including HBCUs.

17 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

18 It is the sense of Congress that—

19 (1) the United States should promote and ex-
20 pand collaborative research partnerships between
21 Federal agencies and HBCUs that advance joint
22 partnerships in education, economic growth, food se-
23 curity, democracy and governance, agriculture, envi-
24 ronmental conservation, small and medium-sized

1 business development, humanitarian assistance, and
2 conflict stabilization in developing countries; and

3 (2) the United States should continue to facili-
4 tate and deepen partnerships between HBCUs and
5 Sub-Saharan Africa.

6 **SEC. 4. PURPOSES.**

7 The purposes of this Act are—

8 (1) to strengthen the capacity of HBCUs to
9 partner with relevant Federal departments and
10 agencies in support of United States and African
11 joint interests, including in the areas of democracy
12 and good governance, food and agricultural security,
13 education and human capital, youth development,
14 trade and economic development, and public health
15 infrastructure;

16 (2) to help integrate the work of HBCUs with
17 the foreign policy and foreign assistance priorities of
18 the United States, as appropriate;

19 (3) to bolster and facilitate productive inter-
20 actions between HBCUs and relevant Federal de-
21 partments and agencies;

22 (4) to encourage HBCU participation in rel-
23 evant Federal programs, grants, contracts, and co-
24 operative agreements;

1 (5) to expand existing partnership initiatives
2 between HBCUs and relevant Federal departments
3 and agencies; and

4 (6) to recognize the historic contributions of
5 HBCUs to relations between the United States and
6 Africa.

7 **SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.**

8 In this Act:

9 (1) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-**
10 **TEES.**—The term “appropriate congressional com-
11 mittees” means—

12 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of
13 the Senate; and

14 (B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
15 the House of Representatives.

16 (2) **EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE.**—The term
17 “educational exchange” means an activity listed in
18 section 602(a) of the Mutual Educational and Cul-
19 tural Exchange Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2452a(a)).

20 (3) **HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE OR UNI-**
21 **VERSITY; HBCU.**—The terms “historically Black col-
22 lege or university” and “HBCU” mean a part B in-
23 stitution described in section 322(2) of the Higher
24 Education Act of 1965 (22 U.S.C. 1061(2)).

1 (4) MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTION.—The
2 term “minority-serving institution” means an insti-
3 tution listed in section 371(a) of the Higher Edu-
4 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067q(a)).

5 (5) RELEVANT FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND
6 AGENCIES.—The term “relevant Federal depart-
7 ments and agencies” includes—

8 (A) the Department of State;

9 (B) the United States Agency for Inter-
10 national Development; and

11 (C) any other Federal department or agen-
12 cy that is engaged in designing, providing, or
13 supporting United States foreign assistance (in-
14 cluding development finance) that the President
15 determines is relevant for the purposes of this
16 Act.

17 (6) SHORT-TERM GRADUATE AND TECHNICAL
18 EXPERT EXCHANGE PROGRAM.—The term “short-
19 term graduate and technical expert exchange pro-
20 gram” means an exchange program lasting 12
21 months or shorter, including university exchange
22 programs, professional non-degree programs, and in-
23 ternships.

1 **SEC. 7. EXPANDING EXCHANGE PROGRAMMING FOR**
2 **SCHOLARS FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State and the
4 USAID Administrator should seek to strengthen and ex-
5 pand partnerships and educational exchange opportuni-
6 ties, including by working with HBCUs, that build the ca-
7 pacity and expertise of students, scholars, and experts
8 from Sub-Saharan Africa in key development sectors, in-
9 cluding—

10 (1) food systems and agriculture-led economic
11 growth;

12 (2) food safety and security, nutrition, and
13 farming, including aquaculture;

14 (3) animal health and pathology;

15 (4) democracy and governance;

16 (5) water, sanitation, and hygiene;

17 (6) public health;

18 (7) microenterprise business development and
19 entrepreneurship;

20 (8) water security; and

21 (9) environmental resilience.

22 (b) BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AF-
23 FAIRS PROGRAMMING.—The Secretary of State may es-
24 tablish a short-term graduate and technical expert ex-
25 change program for African students, scholars, and tech-
26 nical experts to spend a semester or academic year of non-

1 degree study at institutions referred to in section 6(a) to
2 support knowledge and skills training in the sectors re-
3 ferred to in subsection (a).

4 **SEC. 8. COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH PROGRAM-**
5 **MING.**

6 The Secretary of State and the USAID Adminis-
7 trator shall advance outreach and communications be-
8 tween HBCUs, the Department of State, and USAID and
9 expand partnerships with HBCUs by—

10 (1) providing technical assistance in the devel-
11 opment of grant and partnership applications; and

12 (2) upon request, providing feedback to
13 HBCUs, to the maximum extent practicable, after a
14 grant rejection in order to improve future grant ap-
15 plications, as appropriate.

16 **SEC. 9. CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING.**

17 Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment
18 of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with
19 the USAID Administrator, shall brief the appropriate con-
20 gressional committees regarding—

21 (1) the implementation of existing partnerships
22 and programs between relevant Federal departments
23 and agencies and HBCUs and efforts to expand
24 such partnerships and programs;

1 (2) efforts to strengthen the capacity of
2 HBCUs to participate, or to be eligible to partici-
3 pate, in relevant programs and initiatives;

4 (3) any progress made towards—

5 (A) advancing plans to develop partner-
6 ships or programs and initiatives with HBCUs
7 that are not engaged in existing partnerships
8 with relevant Federal departments and agen-
9 cies; and

10 (B) identifying plans in which an HBCU
11 may participate; and

12 (4) any other information that relevant Federal
13 departments and agencies determine is relevant to
14 promoting opportunities to fund, partner, contract,
15 or otherwise interact with HBCUs.

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