

**1890 LAND-GRANT INSTITUTIONS—130 YEARS
OF BUILDING EQUITY IN AGRICULTURE**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
BIOTECHNOLOGY, HORTICULTURE, AND RESEARCH
OF THE
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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CONTENTS

	Page
Adams, Hon. Alma S., a Representative in Congress from North Carolina, opening statement	2
Prepared statement	3
Conaway, Hon. K. Michael, a Representative in Congress from Texas, opening statement	18
Plaskett, Hon. Stacey E., a Delegate in Congress from Virgin Islands, opening statement	1
Thompson, Hon. Glenn, a Representative in Congress from Pennsylvania, opening statement	4
WITNESSES	
Abdullah, Ph.D., Makola M., President, Virginia State University; Chair, Council of 1890 Universities, Association of Public and Land-grant Univer- sities, Petersburg, VA	5
Prepared statement	7
Jones, Ph.D., Paul A., President, Fort Valley State University; First Vice Chair, Council of 1890 Universities, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, Fort Valley, GA	11
Prepared statement	12
Nave, Ph.D., Felecia M., President and Institutional Executive Officer, Alcorn State University, Lorman, MS	15
Prepared statement	17

1890 LAND-GRANT INSTITUTIONS—130 YEARS OF BUILDING EQUITY IN AGRICULTURE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2020

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON BIOTECHNOLOGY, HORTICULTURE, AND
RESEARCH,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, D.C.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:03 a.m., via Webex, Hon. Stacey E. Plaskett [Chair of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Members present: Representatives Plaskett, Delgado, Harder, Schrier, Pingree, Panetta, Lawson, Torres Small, Adams, Thompson, LaMalfa, Davis, Hagedorn, Jacobs, Baird, Johnson, and Conway (*ex officio*).

Staff present: Lyron Blum-Evitts, Ross Hettervig, Brandon Honeycutt, Chu-Yuan Hwang, Ricki Schroeder, Patricia Straughn, Jeremy Witte, Macey Hammerstrom, Dana Sandman, and Justina Graff.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. STACEY E. PLASKETT, A DELEGATE IN CONGRESS FROM VIRGIN ISLANDS

The CHAIR. This hearing of the Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research entitled, *The 1890 Land-Grant Institutions—130 Years of Building Equity in Agriculture*, will come to order. Welcome and thank you for joining today's hearing. After brief opening remarks, Members will receive testimony from today's witnesses, and then the hearing will be open to questions. Members will be recognized in order of seniority, alternating between Majority and Minority Members. When you are recognized, you will be asked to unmute your microphone, and will have 5 minutes to ask your questions or make comments. If you are not speaking, I ask that you remain muted in order to minimize background noise. In order to get in as many questions as possible, the timer will stay consistently visible on your screen.

Brandon, I will ask you to share in the chat if possible the order of Members so that I can be aware of who is, and who is not, available for us.

It is my honor in this hearing to yield my opening statement to the Vice Chair of the Agriculture Committee, Congresswoman Alma Adams, who is also the co-Chair of the Congressional bipartisan Historically Black Colleges and Universities Caucus. She will provide an opening statement to bring today's discussions, and thank you so much to my colleague, Alma Adams, for all the work

that you have done over the many decades in education, the support that you have for public education, and especially for historically Black colleges and universities.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ALMA S. ADAMS, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM NORTH CAROLINA**

Ms. ADAMS. Thank you, Chair Plaskett. It is good to be here, and happy birthday to our 1890s.

I am grateful for your strong leadership, Chair Plaskett, of the Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research Subcommittee, and also for your foresight in calling this critically important hearing on *1890 Land-Grant Institutions—130 Years of Building Equity in Agriculture*.

Participating in today's hearing is special for me, because 5 years ago when I first came to Congress, I had the honor of addressing the 1890s during an event celebrating their 125th anniversary. So, today we have come full circle.

The Subcommittee has jurisdiction over matters that are related to research, education, and extension; issues that are central to the mission of this country's land-grant university system. That system, aimed at expanding post-secondary opportunities in agriculture and mechanical arts, was established following the passage of the First Morrill Act of 1862. And while these institutions advanced agricultural education and increased the capacity of our agricultural sector, Black students were barred from easily accessing these opportunities. So, 28 years after the passage of the First Morrill Act, Congress passed the Second Morrill Act of 1890. This legislation prohibited racial discrimination in determining admission and led to the creation of the 1890 land-grant university system, expanding educational opportunities for Black students. And since that time, the 19 HBCUs that make up the 1890 system have continued their mission of advancing equity in agriculture through research, education, and extension aimed at serving racial minorities, and historically under-served communities.

In a year that has been marked by a surge of support for racial justice and a pandemic that has disproportionately impacted communities of color, I believe that the mission of the 1890 land-grant system is more important than ever. Congress and the Members of this Committee are committed to our support of the 1890 land-grants, as well as the students and the rural communities that it serves. This commitment was evident when looking back to the 2018 Farm Bill, and thanks to the leadership of Chairman Peterson and the strong advocacy of incoming Chairman Scott, and myself and other Members of this Committee, we were able to pass a strong bipartisan farm bill that included mandatory funding for scholarships to 1890 institutions, established three Centers of Excellence to be led by 1890 universities, and corrected an inequity in the carryover of extension funds from year to year. So, I am proud that these provisions were included in the 2018 Farm Bill, but we still have a lot that we can do to support students and researchers.

I would like to just take a moment to shine a spotlight on the important work that those students and professionals are doing at

my alma mater twice-over, North Carolina A&T State University, which is the largest public HBCU in the nation.

Earlier this year, they received a grant from USDA to establish the Center of Excellence to Motivate and Educate for Achievement, dedicated to encouraging and supporting young people from under-represented minority groups to pursue studies and careers in food, agriculture, and natural resources. But despite their decades of success in supporting small and minority farmers and conducting cutting-edge agricultural research, A&T faces many of the same challenges as the institutions before us today, and I am excited that they are here.

I look forward to hearing the testimony from our esteemed panel of witnesses on these issues and others, and I thank them in advance for taking the time to be with us this morning, and for all that they are doing for students. So, I hope that we get to hear your thoughts on the effectiveness of the implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill provisions, the additional areas for collaboration between Congress and the 1890 system, and how your institutions have been impacted by COVID-19 pandemic.

The Subcommittee and the Committee as a whole must have a solid understanding of your perspective as we look ahead to the next Congress and the next farm bill.

Madam Chair, thank you so very much, and I yield back at this time.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Adams follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ALMA S. ADAMS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS
FROM NORTH CAROLINA

Thank you Chair Plaskett.

I'm grateful for your strong leadership of the Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research Subcommittee and for your foresight in calling this critically important hearing on "*1890 Land-Grant Institutions—130 Years of Building Equity in Agriculture.*"

Participating in today's hearing is special for me—5 years ago, when I first came to Congress, I had the honor of addressing the 1890s during an event celebrating their 125th anniversary.

Today, we've come full circle.

This Subcommittee has jurisdiction over matters related to "research, education, and extension;" issues that are central to the mission of this country's land-grant university system.

That system, aimed at expanding post-secondary opportunities in agriculture, was established following the passage of the First Morrill Act of 1862.

While these institutions advanced agriculture education and increased the capacity of our agriculture sector, Black students were barred from easily accessing these opportunities.

So, twenty-eight years after the passage of the First Morrill Act, Congress passed the Second Morrill Act of 1890.

This legislation prohibited racial discrimination in determining admission, leading to the creation of the 1890 land-grant university system and expanding educational opportunities for Black students.

Since that time, the 19 HBCUs that make up the 1890 system have continued their mission of advancing equity in agriculture through research, education, and extension aimed at serving racial minorities and historically under-served communities.

In a year that has been marked by a surge of support for racial justice and a pandemic that has disproportionately impacted communities of color, **I believe that the mission of the 1890 land-grant system is more important as ever.**

That is why Congress and the Members of this Committee are committed in our support of the 1890 land-grant system, as well as the students and rural communities it serves.

This commitment is evident when looking back to the 2018 Farm Bill.

Thanks to the leadership of Chairman Peterson and the strong advocacy of incoming Chairman Scott, myself, and other Members of this Committee, we were able to pass a strong, bipartisan farm bill that included mandatory funding for scholarships to 1890 institutions, established three Centers of Excellence to be led by 1890 universities, and corrected an inequity in the carryover of extension funds from year to year.

I am proud that these provisions were included in the 2018 Farm Bill, but there is always more than can be done to support our students, researchers, and extension professionals.

I'd like to take a moment to shine spotlight on the important work that those students and professionals are doing at my two-time alma mater, North Carolina A&T State University.

In 2020, College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at N.C. A&T reached \$23 million in annual extramural research, with much of that research focusing on issues affecting small farmers and under-served communities across the state.

Additionally, earlier this year, A&T received a grant from USDA to establish the Center of Excellence to Motivate and Educate for Achievement, dedicated to encouraging and supporting young people from underrepresented minority groups to pursue studies and careers in food, agriculture, and natural resources.

However, despite their decades of success in supporting small and minority farmers and conducting cutting-edge agricultural research, A&T faces many of the same challenges as the institutions before us today, including securing matching funds from our state legislature.

I look forward to hearing testimony from our esteemed panel of witnesses on that issue and others, and I thank them in advance for taking the time to be with us this morning.

I hope we get to hear your thoughts on the implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill provisions, additional areas for collaboration between Congress and the 1890 system, and how your institutions have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I yield back.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much for your opening remarks.

I just want to let the Committee know that in consultation with the Ranking Member and pursuant to Rule XI(e), I want to make Members of the Subcommittee aware that other Members of the full Committee may join us today.

I would now like to welcome the Ranking Minority Member present, Mr. Thompson, for his opening statement.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. GLENN THOMPSON, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM PENNSYLVANIA**

Mr. THOMPSON. Well good morning everyone, and thank you, Chair Plaskett, for convening this hearing today. Thank you, Congresswoman Adams, for your opening remarks and your leadership with these wonderful institutions of learning, and your leadership in leading for the support for them.

Now, I am pleased to be celebrating such an important occasion, August 30, 2020. While 2020 wasn't the most banner year in all of our lives for different reasons, there were some incredible milestones to be celebrated, and that was August 30, marking the 130th anniversary of the enactment of the Morrill Act of 1890, also known as the Second Morrill Act. This law, which led to the establishment of our 1890 land-grant universities that today number 19 in total.

When we were celebrating the 125th anniversary in 2015, the House Agriculture Committee was in the early stages of developing what is now the 2018 Farm Bill. During that time, we heard testimony from several university Presidents about the continuing contributions and successes of their institutions, and how Congress can continue to improve their capacity to provide agriculture edu-

cation extension and research. I am proud that the 2018 Farm Bill delivered several wins for the 1890 land-grant universities, including addressing a funding carryover disparity that treated 1890 extension programs differently than their other extension counterparts. The farm bill also notably established a grant program to award scholarships for students at 1890 land-grant institutions, a priority I know several on this Committee worked hard to deliver, including my friend and future Chairman, David Scott.

Our nation's land-grant system, especially the 1890 land-grant university role, will continue to play a pivotal role in training and educating the next generation of farmers and ranchers, and other agriculture professionals. Their research and extension mission is a critical component of American agriculture and is envied around the world.

We are fortunate to have several leaders from the 1890 land-grant universities with us today, and I look forward to a productive discussion.

Thank you, Madam Chair, and I yield back.

The CHAIR. Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

I would like to acknowledge that the Ranking Member of our full Committee, Mr. Conaway, is also with us. Thank you for your leadership and for being with us through this important hearing.

Once again, I want to welcome all of our witnesses, and thank you for being here today. I request that other Members submit their opening statements for the record so the witnesses may begin their testimony, and to ensure that there is ample time for questioning.

At this time, I will introduce our first witness, Dr. Makola Abdullah, the 14th President of Virginia State University. Mr. Abdullah has served in this role since February 2016, and he is an alumnus of Howard University and Northwestern University. Doctor, you have your time now for your opening statement. Thank you for being with us.

**STATEMENT OF MAKOLA M. ABDULLAH, PH.D., PRESIDENT,
VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY; CHAIR, COUNCIL OF 1890
UNIVERSITIES, ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC AND LAND-GRANT
UNIVERSITIES, PETERSBURG, VA**

Dr. ABDULLAH. Thank you very much, Chair Stacey Plaskett. Thank you to Ranking Member Glenn Thompson, and of course, thank you to Agriculture Vice Chair Alma Adams, and also Members of the Committee, my fellow 1890 Presidents, and other guests who are here today, for this opportunity to speak about the 1890 land-grant university system, and the very important role that 1890 universities play in the future of this nation.

I am Dr. Makola Abdullah, 14th President of Virginia State, and the current Chair of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities Council of 1890 Universities. The council is composed of the Presidents of the 19 Black land-grant institutions. These institutions were born out of a time of racial separation and exclusion fueled by segregation and racial intolerance, and they were built upon the pillars of access, opportunity, inclusive excellence, and persistence.

The 1890s were founded to provide equitable education for all students, especially Blacks and other minorities, in former slave-holding states, and they are distinguished from other institutions of higher learning, not only because of their commitment to teach the practical disciplines of agriculture, engineering, life sciences, and nutrition to minority and under-served populations, but because of the important agriculture research that they conduct on behalf of their state, the country, and the globe. The 1890s are also unique because of their mission to extend their teaching beyond the campus walls to the citizens of their respective states, especially, again, to minorities and socioeconomically disadvantaged people, so communities can prosper and grow.

Nearly 4 months ago, on August 30, 2020, the United States Congress recognized the 130th anniversary of the signing of the Second Morrill Act, which created these 19 historically Black land-grant universities. This was not only a celebration, but an important reminder of the vital role that our 19 universities continue to play today.

Indeed, the unprecedented challenges that 2020 has presented us with are tied to the very foundation of the 1890 land-grant system, and we are perfectly positioned, with your support, to be at the forefront of developing innovative solutions to those challenges.

I stand before you today to thank you not only for this past support, but also for your future commitment to the growth and expansion of the 1890 land-grant system, a commitment necessary to meet the challenges we have seen unfold this year, and for those still yet to come tomorrow. A commitment that will further the economic prosperity and health of families, businesses, and communities that we serve, and a commitment that would mean your support of Federal appropriation increases in Fiscal Year 2021, and beyond.

At my own institution, Virginia State University, I can share by example—excuse me. At my own institution, I can share, for example, that the proposed appropriation increases to our Fiscal Year 2021 budget and beyond would allow us to make great strides forward in agricultural research, teaching, and outreach in the following ways.

Our food and ag research program at Virginia State is funded by the 1890 Evans-Allen Act of 1977. Those Evans-Allen funds have led towards hundreds of scientific breakthroughs in the areas of plant and soil sciences, food science, and small ruminants that include priorities for under-served populations. Those Evans-Allen funds have direct impacts on citizens and businesses of our state every day.

Another part of VSU's 1890 land-grant mission is its Virginia Cooperative Extension Program. This program brings our university-based research and knowledge to the homes and businesses of Virginia citizens, especially minorities and socio-disadvantaged people. This science-based nontraditional education strengthens our food and agricultural industry, enhances the health of families and businesses, and fosters stable communities for under-served populations.

It is this 1890s Cooperative Extension Program that allowed U.S. Army veteran and stage 4 cancer survivor Rob Davis to transition

after 30 years in the military to a successful career as a small, niche-crop farmer in our state. We have made these strides despite the 1890 land-grant system receiving only 25.8 percent of the Evans-Allen funds authorized by the Federal Government, and only 18 percent of the Congressionally-authorized 20 percent of 1890 extension program funds. Meanwhile, again, our 1862 land-grant partners enjoy a significantly larger percentage of total funding for their Smith-Lever Act allocation, and larger state matches for cooperative extension.

I stand before you to testify that on behalf of all of the 1890 land-grant Presidents, and we are very grateful for the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations, and that we fully support closing the gap of funding percentage the 1890s receive for ag research and extension, compared to our 1862 counterparts.

The 1890 land-grant system was founded to be an equal partner in providing agricultural education, research, and extension to the citizens of our states, and we have repeatedly demonstrated the impacts we make in doing so. We are perfectly positioned to address the unprecedented challenges that our communities are facing today.

Increases in these and other related 1890 budget line items will play a critical role in helping to attract and retain instructional faculty, creative and innovative researchers and extension specialists, and inquisitive food and ag science scholars. It will also allow the 1890s to make long overdue upgrades to our aged 20th century infrastructure, enabling us to deliver 21st century programs and solutions to limited resource, minority, and under-served audiences.

In addition to budget line increases, I am also asking the House Agriculture Committee to support the following: to reinstitute the 1890 USDA Task Force, ensuring the membership of senior decision-making agency representatives are included in the 2023 Farm Bill; to increase the opportunity and support for greater access for 1890 institutions to become an integral part of institutions that receive SNAP-Ed funds. This is the largest Federal nutrition education program that is directed at poor and limited resource families. Presently, fewer than—

The CHAIR. Dr. Abdullah—

Dr. ABDULLAH. Yes.

The CHAIR. Your time has expired. If you could just wrap up very quickly, all of your written testimony will be taken in.

Dr. ABDULLAH. Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

I will say this in closing. I want to thank our Congressman, Donald McEachin, and all of you for your continued support and commitment to Virginia State University and the entire 1890 land-grant system.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Abdullah follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MAKOLA M. ABDULLAH, PH.D., PRESIDENT, VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY; CHAIR, COUNCIL OF 1890 UNIVERSITIES, ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC AND LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES, PETERSBURG, VA

The Next Farm Bill: The 1890 Land-Grant System

Thank you, Chair Stacey Plaskett, Ranking Member Neal Dunn, Members of the Committee, my fellow 1890 Presidents and other guests appearing here today, for this opportunity to speak about the 1890 land-grant university system and the im-

portant role the 1890 universities play in the future of this nation. I am Dr. Makola M. Abdullah, 14th President of Virginia State University and current Chair of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities' Council of 1890 Universities.

The Council is comprised of Presidents of the 19 black land-grant institutions. These institutions were born out of a time of racial separatism and exclusion, fueled by segregation and racial intolerance. They were built upon the pillars of access, opportunity, inclusive excellence and persistence.

The 1890s were founded to provide equitable education for all citizens, especially blacks and other minorities, in former slave-holding states. And they are distinguished from other institutions of higher learning not only because of their commitment to teach the practical disciplines of agriculture, engineering, and life sciences and nutrition to minority and under-served populations, but because of the important agricultural research they conduct on behalf of their state, the country and the globe. The 1890s are also unique because of their mission to extend their teaching beyond campus walls to the citizens of their respective states—especially to minorities and the socioeconomically disadvantaged—so communities can prosper and grow.

Nearly 4 months ago, on August 30, 2020, the United States Congress recognized the 130th Anniversary of the signing of the Second Morrill Act, which created these 19 historically Black land-grant universities. This was not only a celebration, but also an important reminder of the vital role these 19 universities continue to play today. Indeed, the unprecedented challenges that 2020 has presented us with are tied to the very foundation of the 1890 land-grant system, and we are perfectly positioned, with your support, to be at the forefront of developing innovative solutions to them.

How, exactly?

To begin with, our 1890 land-grant forefathers held the belief that “men and women of talent and ability, regardless of their socioeconomic condition, can contribute to the common good through hard work and the opportunity to develop and prosper.” Today, important dialogues have reemerged about racial equity and how to ensure all Americans have an equal opportunity to flourish and succeed. Those are precisely the issues 1890 land-grant universities have a 130 year track record of successfully addressing, and we look forward to your continued support in helping us play an important role in the resolution of today's equity issues.

Additionally, our country's food supply chain, one of the most important sectors of the economy, was shaken to its foundation this year by COVID-19. While the impacts of the pandemic are still unfolding, it is already clear that necessary improvements need to be made to eliminate bottlenecks in farm labor, processing, transportation and logistics, as well as to address momentous shifts in consumer demand to protect our food and nutrition security. These improvements will require research, technology, and a trained workforce knowledgeable about agriculture, food production and safety, nutrition, and engineering—in other words, exactly what the 1890 land-grant system does best.

Our fragile food system must also be viewed through the lens that 2050 is only 30 years from now. By then, the world must feed two billion more people than it does today. According to the World Economic Forum, that is a 56% increase in the amount of food the world produced just 10 years ago. The challenge is straight-forward—today's agriculture cannot deliver enough food to meet that need. How we address this challenge—to feed more people, safely, affordably and responsibly—will again require research, technology, and a trained workforce knowledgeable about agriculture, food production and safety, nutrition, and engineering—in other words, as I stated earlier, exactly what the 1890 land-grant system does best.

I join the other 1890 land-grant university Presidents and the millions of Americans who have benefited from our institutions' services in thanking you for your past support of the direct Federal appropriations we receive for our Cooperative Extension and agricultural research programs. These appropriations stem from Sections 1444 and 1445 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) and constitute our most significant funding source. These appropriations also reflect the Federal-state partnership managed by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)—USDA's extramural science agency. But most importantly—especially to the citizens we serve—these specific appropriations have permitted our institutions to provide the services, solutions and economic successes to our states and our nation as a whole.

I stand before you today to thank you not only for this past support, but also for your future commitment to the growth and expansion of the 1890 land-grant system, as well. A commitment necessary to meet the challenges we've seen unfold this year and for those still to come tomorrow. A commitment that will further the economic prosperity and health of the families, businesses, and communities we serve.

And a commitment that is contingent on your support of Federal appropriation increases in FY 2021 and beyond.

The impact this commitment would make on our 1890 land-grant system is immense. But the positive impacts it would make on the people we serve—who we all serve—is even greater.

At my own institution, Virginia State University, I can share, for example, that the proposed appropriation increases to our FY 2021 budget and beyond would allow us to make great strides forward in agricultural research, teaching and outreach in the following ways.

Our food and agricultural research program at VSU is funded by the **1890 Evans-Allen Act of 1977**. Those Evans-Allen funds have led to hundreds of scientific breakthroughs in the areas of plant and soil sciences, food science, and small ruminants that include priorities for under-served populations. Those Evans-Allen funds have direct impacts on the citizens and businesses of our state . . . every day.

Take our beloved Sally Bell's Kitchen, a family-owned Richmond fixture since 1924, known for its box lunches, deviled eggs and, perhaps most famously, its potato salad. Everyone wanted their potato salad. Sally Bell's knew they could grow their business if they could make it available in stores, but their homemade side dish just didn't have the shelf-life to withstand shipping to and selling from stores. They knew the market was there, but they had no way to get to it.

Dr. Chyer Kim, a food scientist at VSU's Agricultural Research Station, researched ways to help this small business reach their goal to extend their product's shelf-life, while maintaining its legendary taste and keeping consumers safe. He landed on modified atmospheric packaging, or MAP, a technology that substitutes the atmospheric air inside a package with a protective gas mix that helps ensure a product will stay fresh for as long as possible. He worked with Sally Bell's Kitchen to transition to this method of packaging, and now, if you're ever in Richmond, I welcome you to stop by any number of grocery stores to pick up a pint.

I am sure 3 years ago when they were working on this project, Sally Bell's Kitchen had no idea that selling their products outside their restaurant's walls would play an important role in keeping their 96 year old business afloat during the pandemic. But it has. And Sally Bell's Kitchen is just one of hundreds of stories of how 1890 land-grants like VSU leverage Evans-Allen funds to support the health and economic prosperity of our communities.

Another part of VSU's tripartite 1890s land-grant mission is its **Virginia Cooperative Extension program**. This program brings our university-based research and knowledge to the homes and businesses of Virginia's citizens—especially minorities and the socioeconomically disadvantaged. This science-based, non-traditional education strengthens our food and agricultural industry, enhances the health of families and businesses, and fosters stable communities for under-served populations. It is this 1890's Cooperative Extension program that allowed U.S. Army veteran and stage-four cancer survivor Rob Davis to transition after 30 years in the military to a successful career as a small, niche-crop farmer in our state. After working with the VSU Small Farm Outreach Program for a few years, Davis learned about soil management, important agribusiness strategies, and ways the different USDA agencies could assist him. Davis says he is grateful for the education and connections he has received from VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. In fact, and I quote Mr. Davis, "I couldn't have done anything without them. It's impacted my whole family." Furthermore, as a result of his experiences with VSU's Extension program, Davis says his three sons have now developed their own interests in agriculture.

Yes, these are just two examples of the statewide impacts we at Virginia State University make every day with your past support. And we've made these strides, despite the 1890 land-grant system receiving only 25.8% of the Evans-Allen Program funds authorized by the Federal Government. While we're grateful for FY 2020 appropriations of \$67 million for agricultural research, we are reminded that that 25.8% falls significantly short of the 30% of the total Hatch Program funds authorized by the Federal Government to our 1862 land-grant partners, who also benefit from larger state matches.

Similarly, we are grateful for the FY 2020 budget appropriation of \$57 million to the 1890 land-grant system for its Cooperative Extension program. But we are also reminded that this appropriation represents only 18% of the Congressional authorized 20% for 1890 Extension Program funds. Meanwhile, our 1862 land-grant partners enjoy a significantly larger percentage of total funding per their Smith-Lever Act allocation and larger state matches for Cooperative Extension.

Twenty-five-point-eight percent *versus* 30%. Eighteen percent *versus* 20%. I stand before you today to testify that on behalf of all of the 1890 land-grant Presidents, I fully support a close in the gap of the funding percentage the 1890s receive for

agricultural research and Extension compared to our 1862 counterparts. Closing the 4.2 percentage gap for agricultural research will bring our appropriation levels from \$67 million to \$77 million. Closing the 2% gap for 1890 Cooperative Extension programming will bring our appropriation levels from \$57 million to \$63 million.

The 1890 land-grant system was founded to be an equal partner in providing agricultural education, research and Extension to the citizens of our states, and we have repeatedly demonstrated the impacts we make in doing so. We are also perfectly positioned to address the unprecedented challenges our communities are facing today. Therefore, I and my fellow 1890 land-grant university Presidents, fully support the proposed close to this funding gap.

Additionally, on behalf of my fellow 1890 land-grant university Presidents, I fully support the following budget line item increases.

1. Increase FY 2020 appropriation for the 1890 Capacity Building Grants from \$23,009,800 to \$30 million.
2. Increase FY 2020 appropriation for the 1890s Facilities Grants Program from \$20.5 million to \$30 million.
3. Increase FY 2020 appropriation for the 1890s Facilities Grants Program from \$20.5 million to \$30 million.*
4. Increase FY 2020 appropriation for three 1890s Centers of Excellence at \$10 million annually to six centers at \$10 million each for a total of \$60 million.
5. Increase the discretionary appropriation for Scholarships at the 1890 institutions for students who intend to pursue a career in the food and agricultural sciences for funds over FYs 2020 through 2023 to an additional \$40 million in discretionary funds.
6. And additionally, we would like to see a designation for funds for the 1890 institutions to address the healthcare infrastructure COVID-19 has demonstrated we do not have in place to care for our students on campus, as well the digital infrastructure we need to deliver assistance to individuals, families and communities during and after the pandemic.

Increases to these six 1890 budget line items will play a critical role in helping to attract and retain instructional faculty; creative and innovative researchers and extension specialists; and inquisitive food and agri-science scholars. They will also allow the 1890s to make long overdue upgrades to our aged 20th-century infrastructure, enabling us to deliver 21st-century programs and solutions to limited-resource, minority and under-served audiences.

In addition to these budget line increases, I am also asking the House Agriculture Committee to support the following:

1. Reconstitute the 1890/USDA Task Force, ensure membership of senior decision-making agency representatives, and include statutorily in the 2023 Farm Bill.
2. Increase the opportunity and support for greater access for 1890 institutions to become an integral part of institutions that receive SNAP-Ed funds. This is the largest Federal nutrition education program that is targeted to poor and limited resource families. Presently, fewer than five 1890 institutions receive SNAP-Ed funds from respective states. Greater access to these funds will enhance our capacity to serve the under-served, hard-to-reach and under-represented communities.
3. Examine the formula for distributing funds in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) to insure equitable funding to 1890 institutions.
4. The concepts put forward in the “The Justice for Black Farmers Act” introduced by Senators Booker, Warren, and Gillibrand.
5. Remove the “matching” requirement from all USDA competitive programs for all minority institutions.
6. Encourage the states to invest in their 1890 institutions, via at minimum, the support of the required 1:1 match for 1890 Federal capacity funds.
7. Establish a Post Doctorial Program for the 1890/Land-Grant/HBCU universities with emphasis on Academics, Research and Extension/Community Development. And require each post Doc to specialize in at least two of the three major component areas. This would give students at minority institutions an opportunity to gain hands-on professional experience in two of these three

* **Editor’s note:** the statement has been reproduced as submitted to the Committee. The duplication in the content of *items 2 and 3* reflects the testimony as it was submitted.

areas, thereby making them more competitive with 1862 and private universities who routinely receive such exposure prior to taking full employment.

8. Reestablish the Workforce Diversity Summer Intern Program for College Students as a viable means for enhancing hands-on professional experience. This program was previously funded by USDA, but now could be funded between Federal and state governments and private industries. Students throughout the university could be encourage/required to spend at least one summer with a Federal agency and one with private industry. If a student is given the opportunity to spend more than one summer with an employer, then an offer of full employment would be expected.

In closing, I thank you for your continued commitment and support of Virginia State University and to the entire 1890 land-grant system. I assure you that an investment in the 1890s is an investment in our nation's future.

The CHAIR. Thank you so much, Dr. Abdullah.

Next, I will recognize Dr. Paul Jones. Dr. Jones is currently serving as the 10th President of Ford Valley State University. Dr. Jones has served in this position since December 2015. He is a graduate of Utah State University and Colorado State University. Thank you so much for being with us, and welcome.

STATEMENT OF PAUL A. JONES, PH.D., PRESIDENT, FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY; FIRST VICE CHAIR, COUNCIL OF 1890 UNIVERSITIES, ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC AND LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES, FORT VALLEY, GA

Dr. JONES. Thank you, Chair Plaskett, Ranking Member Thompson, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

Again, I am Paul Jones, and I serve as the 10th President of Fort Valley State, which is located in Middle Georgia.

As you can imagine, like every part of our ecosystem, COVID-19 has presented all of us with tremendous challenges. Yet, it has also provided opportunities for us to refocus our institutions as we move forward. After abruptly moving online in March and completing our online in the summer, we safely moved to a traditional in-person environment. The university put in extraordinary safety measures to ensure a safe return for staff, faculty, and students. Despite the many challenges we faced, not only were we able to keep our campus safe during the fall, the university—safely when reopened, experienced its largest enrollment since fall of 2012. A major part of that enrollment success, I should say, is directly attributed to your passing of the 2018 Farm Bill. The passing of this bill not only supported much needed agricultural scholarship funding for students, but it helped to support three new 1890 Centers of Excellence carryover provision, and an important provision that monitors the 1890 matching funds to ensure all of our 18 states are meeting this one-to-one match obligation for the entire 1890 land-grant system.

Another important factor of enrollment stability and success was your passing of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, and the CARES Act relief funds for HBCUs and minority serving institutions, and colleges and universities serving low-income students. This support has enabled the university to significantly enhance our technology capacity, purchase valuable personal protective equipment and increase our testing capacity, eliminate significant deficits due to the refunds mid-year, and to mitigate large-scale employee reductions or layoffs.

The 1890 land-grant system is a tremendous asset to higher education and has, we believe, much greater capacity to help solve the many problems of our country and beyond. The pandemic of the virus and the social challenges our nation has faced put a much greater spotlight on the acute health, economic, and other disparities we are facing as a country today. These disparities are particularly true for the students we serve, which represent 80 percent of Pell Grant recipients.

I believe greater focus and support of the 1890s system will enable us to play a broader role in solving problems throughout the communities we all serve, particularly in under-served communities and the rural communities. Support for our research and extension agenda would aid in building greater capacity. For example, we are in the process of establishing a Center for Agricultural Innovation and Entrepreneurship, which is vitally important to helping us build that infrastructure and to provide researchers and faculty and business owners with the opportunity to move forward in this entrepreneurship venture. This center is the key on our agenda, and we are thankful to the funding that we have received.

The hallmark of our rigorous research programs is collaboration. Whether it is the work with global teams, the 65 scientists and 30 research institutions which has decoded and sequenced the pearl millet genome, revealing critical heat sculpting strategies in this grain crop, or the specialty crops which have demonstrated that *Scutellaria* has anti-cancer properties and can reduce the tumor size in a rat brain, or our collaborative work with the University of Georgia or other several USDA Agricultural Research Service labs to characterize the whitefly infestation in fruit and vegetable crops in the Southeast United States. All of these are important in our collaborative efforts, and it is our pathway forward.

We hope that we have continued support. We look forward to continue to support to improve the infrastructure, the broadband infrastructure, and the critical mission that we serve as 1890 institutions to support the rural communities and under-served communities.

Again, I want to pause there, rather, because of time. I am grateful for this opportunity to address you today, and I look forward to your questions.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Jones follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PAUL A. JONES, PH.D., PRESIDENT, FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY; FIRST VICE CHAIR, COUNCIL OF 1890 UNIVERSITIES, ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC AND LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES, FORT VALLEY, GA

Introduction

Chair Plaskett, Ranking Member Dunn, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture thank you for this opportunity to address you today. I am Paul Jones, and I have the privilege of serving as the tenth President of Fort Valley State University (FVSU) in middle Georgia.

I am honored to speak to you today, along with my distinguished colleagues, to testify in support of the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions. As you know, the land-grant system was established as part of the Second Morrill Act of 1890. Celebrating our 125th Anniversary this year, Fort Valley State University was established in 1895.

The FVSU College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology offers undergraduate and graduate programs in Animal Sciences, Agriculture Economics, Agriculture Education, Biotechnology, Engineering Technology, Food and Nutrition,

Electronics Technology, Infant and Child Development, Plant Science, Public Health, and Veterinarian Technology.

FVSU's Response to COVID

During the fall 2020 semester, the University System of Georgia, reopened each of its campuses in an in-person modality. Despite the enormous challenges of the pandemic and state budget reductions, the University reopened in the fall and experienced its largest enrollment since fall 2012, which increased nearly 8% over last year. Part of the increase is directly attributed to the new 1890 Agriculture Scholarships from the 2018 Farm Bill. The fall semester saw more than 75 new agriculture scholars join the University.

In addition, thanks to Congressional support of the CARES Act funding and The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act and the CARES Act Relief Funds to HBCUs, Minority Serving Institutions, and Colleges and Universities Serving Low-Income Students, we are able to significantly enhance our technology capacity, purchase valuable personal protection equipment and testing capacity, eliminate significant auxiliary deficits due to student refunds, and mitigate large scale employee reductions.

Land-Grant Function

The 1890 land-grant institutions system and the U.S. Department of Agriculture have a monumental responsibility of addressing global food security through rigorous research, extension, and educational programs. Technological advances applicable in agriculture, natural resource utilization and conservation, and food production will enable us to meet this daunting challenge, provided there is an appropriate allocation of resources to enhance infrastructure at agricultural universities. Topics such as precision agriculture, artificial intelligence, big data, and gene editing have become a part of the day-to-day conversation within the agricultural research community.

FVSU has robust research and educational programs in bioinformatics, precision agriculture, renewable energies, genome editing, and other technologies. We are ideally positioned to play a lead role in the conceived 1890 Center of Excellence in Emerging Technologies.

FVSU has recently developed its 2020–2025 Strategic Plan that emphasizes Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Development. To this end, we have created the Office of Economic Development and Land-Grant Affairs. In addition to critical thinking, communication, teamwork, and leadership capabilities, entrepreneurship is an essential skill for college graduates to compete in today's ever-evolving global economy.

We are in the process of establishing the FVSU Center for Agricultural Innovation and Entrepreneurship to assist clients in starting and sustaining agribusinesses, assist faculty and researchers with innovation, technology transfer, and commercialization efforts, and encourage and facilitate student activities resulting in entrepreneurship ventures. The Center will play the much needed intermediary functions in economically depressed communities to connect people to information and resources that will transform ideas into businesses, resulting in local and regional economic development.

Research and Innovation

It is critical that research programs pursue “rigor” in order for research findings to be reliable. The hallmark of FVSU's rigorous research programs is collaboration.

For example, a global team of 65 scientists from 30 research institutions, including Fort Valley State University (FVSU), has decoded and sequenced the pearl millet genome, revealing critical heat coping strategies in this grain crop. This discovery, published in the journal *Nature Biotechnology*, will also help researchers better understand climate adaptation in other important cereal crops and develop strategies to enhance crop production despite changes in global temperatures.

FVSU is considered a leader in specialty crop research, and current projects at the institution focus on the medicinal and nutraceutical properties of *Scutellaria*, stevia, bacopa, and other plants. Through our collaborative work, we demonstrated that *Scutellaria* has anti-cancer properties; its administration can reduce the tumor size in the rat brain.

FVSU's nanotechnology lab is extracting cellulose nanocrystals and micro fibrillated cellulose, and the derived aerogel and hydrogel have applications in agriculture water conservation, environmental safety, biomedicine, electronics, insulation, packaging, and textiles, to name a few.

FVSU has established research collaborations with several USDA-Agricultural Research Services' (ARS) Labs recently. FVSU, in partnership with the University of Georgia and ARS, is working on a research project to characterize whitefly infesta-

tions in fruit and vegetable crops in the southeastern U.S. and provide short- and long-term integrated pest management and molecular tools that can be used to mitigate the infestations.

We are in the process of establishing similar partnerships with the USDA–ARS Peanut Lab in Dawson, Georgia, on a project to address the aflatoxin problem in peanut kernels, and with the ARS Lab in Byron, Georgia to work on a pecan project. FVSU has recently established the Center for Ultrastructure Research that is expected to expand these collaborations further.

The Georgia Small Ruminant Research and Extension Center at FVSU is the largest facility of its kind east of the Mississippi River and is recognized as a national leader in goat research. FVSU continues to be the lead institution for the American Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control, a global organization with numerous collaborators from 1862 and 1890 universities, USDA–ARS stations, international institutions, and industry groups dedicated to finding non-chemical methods of controlling gastrointestinal parasites in sheep and goats. Because of this group's work, farmers have greatly improved the sustainability of their sheep and goat production systems by reducing synthetic drug usage by up to 90 percent, which saves approximately \$150–\$200 per 100 animals per year.

FVSU researchers, in collaboration with USDA–ARS scientists, are using genome-editing techniques to improve reproductive efficiency in sheep and goats. Gene editing allows researchers, for instance, to eliminate an undesirable trait by precisely knocking out the gene without introducing a foreign gene into the native genome.

FVSU researchers have demonstrated the effectiveness of non-thermal technology for the destruction of *E. coli* on meat and continue to evaluate cost-effective pathogen reduction strategies and conduct food safety training for small and very small meat processors in Georgia. FVSU has also expanded its custom meat processing services beyond its traditional service area and clientele to help the state meet the red meat processing demand that has been negatively impacted by the pandemic.

Cooperative Extension

To provide support to beginning farmers and ranchers in agriculture and to improve outreach and communication to military veterans about farming and ranching opportunities, FVSU's Cooperative Extension Program has been conducting quarterly workshops impacting Georgia's Strike force counties that have engaged hundreds of participants in USDA programs, GAP/GHP certification, organic and sustainable food production, conservation and assistance available from USDA and local farm support agencies.

FVSU has an 18 acre organic farming system where farmers are exposed to an organic tree, shrub, vine fruit growing, organic barrel gardening, organic small plot gardening, organic hoop house gardening, and organic animal production.

FVSU is collaborating with the University of Georgia, USDA Rural Development, USDA Forest Service, and other agencies to address minority forest landowners' not receiving any technical assistance or information that will assist them in their operation of maintaining and managing their forestlands to maximize their operation's income. This program's impact is an increase in the overall knowledge of 350 landowners in the following topic areas: wills and estate planning, timber management and marketing, USDA cost-sharing programs, wildlife management, and land management, including surveying.

Our Mobile Information Technology Center educates communities on record-keeping and accessing USDA information on the web. It is also used to assist in providing services to veterans and others who need to utilize technology to access government services via the web. Additionally, working with the State Health Insurance Assistance Program and the Senior Medicare Patrol, we have saved Georgians more than \$5½ million.

Life on the Farm is a live animal mobile exhibition providing firsthand knowledge of farm life and how it affects each person daily. The Life on the Farm educational program is presented throughout the state at schools, daycare centers, public libraries, churches, town festivals, fairgrounds, and other public meeting places.

The FVSU 4–H program has engaged thousands of youth in healthy living activities resulting in improvement of dietary choices, improvement of attitudes toward healthful foods, increased willingness to try new nutritional foods, increased understanding of the elements of sound nutrition, and daily caloric need *versus* physical exercise, and increased participation by the family in eating together.

Fort Valley State University has been able to educate numerous low to moderate-income families on Energy Audits and distribute energy-related publications to hundreds of Georgians through its Project GREEN, which stands for Georgia Residential Energy Efficiency Network.

Future Congressional Support

A significant issue of concern to all public institutions receiving support for food, agriculture, and natural resource research is aging infrastructure and the lack of funding for maintaining facilities. A recent APLU-sponsored Gordian study revealed some alarming data indicating a severe backlog of deferred maintenance, and the report estimated the cost to be in excess of \$11.5 billion. Funding for improving infrastructure suitable for 21st Century science that addresses emerging issues in agriculture and food production is essential.

Emerging technologies warrant institutions to establish suitable research infrastructure and make adjustments to their outreach and educational programming to effectively train the present and future generations of agriculture and the farming community. There is an imperative and urgent need for institutions to build the capacity to handle massive volumes of data and at the speed and frequency with which they are being collected.

This is particularly critical for smaller land-grant institutions charged with a unique mission of addressing the needs of underrepresented communities, as well as of producers and landowners with limited access to technology and resources. In this context, rural broadband access will have to be our top priority to revitalize rural and economically depressed communities throughout the nation.

I am grateful for this opportunity to address the House Agriculture Committee today. On behalf of the dedicated faculty, staff, and students at FVSU and throughout the 1890s System, I thank you for your continuous support of our institutions and agriculture.

The CHAIR. Thank you so much. I really appreciate your testimony.

Our third witness is Dr. Felecia Nave, the President of Alcorn State University. Dr. Nave has served in this role since July 2019. She received her undergraduate degree from Alcorn State, and she is also an alum of the University of Toledo.

Thank you so much for being with us this morning.

STATEMENT OF FELECIA M. NAVE, PH.D., PRESIDENT AND INSTITUTIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY, LORMAN, MS

Dr. NAVE. Thank you, Chair Plaskett, Ranking Member Thompson, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I also want to extend a thank you to Congresswoman Alma Adams for your continued support of the HBCU community and advocating for legislation and investments that build the capacity of our institutions.

As mentioned, I am Felecia M. Nave, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the 20th President and first female of my alma mater, Alcorn State University. Alcorn has a long and rich tradition of educating students and preparing graduates for a lifetime of success. On behalf of our nearly 3,300 students, more than 600 faculty and staff, and over 25,000 alumni, again, thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the 1890 land-grant institutions and 130 years of building equity in agriculture, and more specifically, Alcorn State University.

Alcorn State University was founded in 1871, and traces its heritage back to both the 1862 and 1890 Morrill Acts. Alcorn is unique among the 1890 institutions because it is the only HBCU founded with a land-grant purpose under the First Morrill Act, making it America's oldest public historically Black land-grant institution. Also, Alcorn is Mississippi's second oldest state-supported institution.

Alcorn's mission is framed around helping students overcome the challenges before them. We attract a racially and ethnically diverse

student body that currently represents 36 states and seven countries, as well as students from varied socioeconomic backgrounds, with nearly 30 percent of first generation and over 70 percent of Pell Grant eligible students. Alcorn has demonstrated its resilience and commitment to providing affordable and equitable educational opportunities.

As is the case with many professions, equity is a topic that continues to present a number of opportunities and challenges in agriculture. As urban centers become more exciting for today's college students, we must work harder to recruit them to rural areas of the country. It can be difficult for students to choose to major in ag-related fields if they have not participated in 4-H club or have not been impacted or affected by extension programming in their local community.

Having diversity in the profession is not only a positive for our students, but also for the agricultural workforce. Our students bring their diverse perspectives and experiences to the workforce, which may often be overlooked if they are not present. Also, this diversity provides for economic mobility for future generations who historically have been disadvantaged.

At Alcorn, our scholarships have been helpful in attracting students to ag majors, and dozens of them have done very well, achieving respectable roles at the national and state levels. However, we must do a better job at tracking the workforce outcomes for these students.

Despite the current challenges presented by the COVID-19 virus, our faculty, staff, and extension agents have continued to find innovative ways to support students, the community, and farmers who lack the necessary resources to deal with the pandemic. Specifically, our extension services have provided programming on healthy eating habits for children, and programming for parents related to helping them talk to their children about COVID-19.

Yet, with our limited resources, we continue to do more with less in order to fill the widening gaps in the areas of health disparities, food insecurities, and workforce development. However, as this pandemic continues to ravage our country, gains that many in this room have fought for generations are threatened. We have yet to fully focus on the residual impact of COVID-19 and think about not just those obvious impacts, but the underlying strain as well.

The 1890s are very grateful for the funding provided to support scholarships for students interested in pursuing careers in agriculture, as well as the Centers of Excellence, of which Alcorn participates in two. The future of American agriculture, farming, and ranching rests in the future of its 1890 land-grants.

To understand this statement, one must look back and reflect on what we have done to see a vision for what tomorrow can look like. As I alluded to earlier, equity and impact are central to the conversation around the future of 1890 land-grant institutions. As many of you know, whether an institution is an 1862 or 1890 land-grant, the expectation is that high quality academic programs and relevant extension programs are available to support the citizenry.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to your staff and my staff for helping prepare for today's event.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Nave follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FELECIA M. NAVE, PH.D., PRESIDENT AND INSTITUTIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY, LORMAN, MS

Thank you, Chair Stacey Plaskett, Ranking Member Neal Dunn, and Members of the House Committee for the opportunity to enter this written statement for the record.

On behalf of our nearly 3,300 students, more than 600 faculty and staff, and over 25,000 alumni thank you, Madame Chairwoman, for the opportunity to provide comments regarding *1890 Land-Grant Institutions—130 Years of Building Equity in Agriculture*.

From the ashes of the Civil War, Alcorn State University was founded in 1871 and traces its heritage back to both the 1862 and 1890 Morrill Acts. Alcorn is unique among the 1890 institutions because it is the only HBCU founded with a land-grant purpose after the First Morrill Act, making it America's oldest public historically Black land-grant institution. Also, Alcorn is Mississippi's second oldest state-supported university.

Our founding leadership included this nation's first Black senator, Hiram Rhodes Revels and our students have followed his lead, pioneering new paths in academics, agriculture, athletics, civil rights, government, medicine and other domains—Pulitzer Prize-winning author Alex Haley, Academy Award nominee actor Michael Clarke Duncan, Civil-Rights icon Medgar Wiley Evers and his wife Myrlie Evers-Williams, and NFL legend Steve McNair stand as just five distinguished alumni who dared to challenge the odds.

Alcorn's mission is framed around helping students overcome the challenges before them. We attract a racially and ethnically diverse student body that currently represents 36 states and seven countries as well as students from varied socioeconomic backgrounds, with nearly 30 percent first generation and over 70 percent Pell Grant eligible students. For nearly 150 years, Alcorn has demonstrated its resilience and commitment to providing affordable and equitable educational opportunities. It is because of this long tradition of success, 1890's, such as Alcorn, continue to serve as an answer to the nation's agricultural workforce needs of the future.

Alcorn State University serves as the lead institution for the federally funded *Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center*, which was established by the 2014 Farm Bill. The Center collaborates with other 1862 and 1890 land-grant universities as well as private non-governmental organizations on research proposals, policy development, and funding to implement actionable items for the success of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

Despite the current challenges presented by the COVID-19 virus, our faculty, staff, and extension agents have continued to find innovative ways to support students, the community and farmers who lack the necessary resources to deal with a pandemic. COVID-19 has further exposed the funding inequities experienced by HBCUs and communities of color. Yet, with our limited resources we continue to do more with less in order to fill the widening gaps in the areas of health disparities, food insecurities, and workforce development.

Agriculture, as you are aware, is critical to Mississippi's and America's food and economic security. Mississippi agriculture, representing \$7.45 billion is the top industry in the state, directly and indirectly employing approximately 29% of the state's workforce. The strength of Mississippi's agriculture is due, in large part, to the strength of the state's two Land-Grant universities—of which Alcorn is the oldest. Through the academic program offerings, research and extension work, the output and efficiency of agriculture in Mississippi continues to improve.

Alcorn State University continues to contribute to the workforce development, cutting-edge research, and outreach efforts in innovative ways. For example, Dr. Keerthi Mandyam's, assistant professor, is researching in the area of microbiomes of energy grass. Her results have led to the development of 1,000+ fungal culture collection with hundreds of fungal endophytes with favorable attributes in enhancing plant productivity and/or soil health.

Assistant professor Dr. Ananda Nanjundaswamy's research focuses on addressing variable yeast ethanol production and the development of efficient conversion rates of yeast transcriptomics under ethanol fermentation from different substrates and fermentation strategies.

Dr. Jacqueline McComb, Director of the Mississippi River Research Center, recently investigates the use of novel sensor technology in Mississippi to aide in enhancing nutrient use efficiency and increased crop production for limited resource farmers as well as to improve environmental quality.

Alcorn's Extension delivers research-based information and resources through community based programs that improve the quality of life for Mississippi's small and limited resource farmers, ranchers, rural communities and under-served audiences through education and outreach. This past year, over 134, 600 individuals across the state have participated in our programs.

Alcorn's Extension Program is also home to a unique program that helps small and disadvantaged farmers gain access to capital and technical assistance who could not otherwise attain credit from traditional financial credit sources. The Small Farm Loan Program assists Mississippi's small farmers who endeavor to start new farm operations or sustain existing farm operations.

Building on our history of daring bravery, Alcorn today stands as a bright beacon of opportunity, shining forth with a future focused on sending out proud graduates into the world. However, in order to continue this rich tradition of producing top-notch graduates in agriculture our nation must continue to invest in 1890 institutions.

The 1890s are very grateful for the funding provided to support scholarships for students interested in pursuing careers in Agriculture and agriculture related fields. Alcorn State University received \$750,000 from USDA Scholars program, which supported 75 high-achieving scholars of color, including a 2020 Gates Scholar. Additionally, the support provided to establish the three Centers of Excellence, of which Alcorn partners in two of the Centers, supports innovative research and programming at our institutions. These are just two examples of programs that should be continued and scaled through increased funding and support.

The future of American agriculture, farming, and ranching rests in the future of its 1890 land-grants. To understand this statement, one must look back and reflect on what we have done to see a vision for what tomorrow will look like. Always on the cutting edge of innovation and progress in agriculture, HBCU land-grants have been at the forefront. Without the work of Dr. George Washington Carver at Tuskegee University, the various colors of clothing we all have on today would not be visible. However, there is an even more important role for 1890s. Artificial Intelligence, Drones and Vertical Farming are only a few of the emerging fields in sustainable agriculture that 1890 students and researchers are capable and prepared to help strengthen the nation's agricultural landscape. In order to remain competitive, facilities at 1890 institutions must remain on par with 1862 institutions if expectations and outcomes are to remain on par.

As alluded to earlier, equity and impact are central to the conversation around the future of 1890 land-grant institutions. As many of you know, whether an institution is an 1862 or 1890 land-grant, the expectation is that high quality academic programs and relevant extension programs are available to support the citizenry of our state and nation. We must address inequities in ways which more strongly support the intended outcomes of our programs and to ensure that we have representation of color at the appropriate levels in the agricultural community[.]

The CHAIR. Thank you so much for your testimony, Dr. Nave.

We will now proceed to hearing—let me see. That is all the testimony for this time. Thank you all.

At this time, Members will be recognized for questions in order of seniority, alternating between majority and minority Members. You will be recognized for 5 minutes each in order to allow us to get in as many questions as possible. Please keep your microphones muted until you are recognized in order to minimize background noise.

I first wanted to ask Mr. Conaway, do you have any questions that you would like to ask at this time? I will defer to you, sir.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM TEXAS**

Mr. CONAWAY. Well, thank you, Madam Chair. No, I don't. I just want to thank our witnesses on their behalf, as well as all of the schools that they represent across the entire spectrum of 1890 schools for the great work that they are doing, and I have no questions and I yield back.

Thank you, ma'am.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much, sir.

I will now open up for my own questions at this time.

I want to thank the witnesses for their testimony, and this topic is a family affair for me. As some of the Members on the Committee may know, one of my sons attended the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, is a graduate from there, and on his father's side, he is the third generation in this family to have attended that institution.

Now, when this Committee last held a hearing on the 1890s system, we focused on recruitment efforts and how to bring more young people into agriculture. I want to explore that topic a little bit more.

This summer, the Board of Directors of the University of the Virgin Islands in my district, also a land-grant institution, unanimously voted to establish a School of Agriculture. I believe this program will be incredibly valuable for our local students and local farmers who already work with the university on research and extension issues, and maybe even to bring in students from other areas who would not have thought to attend.

From your perspective, how can we—and this is open to any of our witnesses. How can we work to encourage students to enroll in a new School of Agriculture? For the Virgin Islands, of course, that would be a unique experience, dealing with agriculture in a Caribbean and tropical climate. What types of recruitment efforts have you found to be most effective, and how can we expand those to bring more young people into this industry through our land-grant universities, and how will the establishment of a formal ag education program support other aspects of the university's research and extension efforts with local farmers and the community?

Dr. ABDULLAH. Thank you so much for your question, Madam Chair.

First, I want to acknowledge the President of UAPB (University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff), Dr. Laurence Alexander, for his wonderful work. I am sure you want him to get acknowledged for his family connection to you.

We have an agricultural education program at Virginia State University. We are very keen on recruiting young people into careers in agriculture, because we think it is so critically important.

If I am being honest, I think one of the challenges is that in our country now with so many who don't grow up in rural environments, that we have to continually educate them to help them understand how important our food and agriculture system is in our country, and how they can play an important difference. And also, how diverse and broad the opportunities are that exist in food and agriculture. Whether you are working on the business processing side, or working on the food side, that there are wonderful and incredible careers that exist in food and agriculture.

In that vein, Representative David Scott, of course, who will be chair, has really shown a strong level of support for our institutions by helping to establish the 1890 Scholars Program. That Scholars Program, we believe, goes a long way towards really letting young people know that not only do we have fantastic opportunities for them to come to school, but we also have financial resources to

really attract them, to get them excited to go into the careers that you believe are the careers of the 21st century.

I really appreciate you asking that question. I believe that our students, our undergraduate students in particular, are really the future of our land-grant system. They are the future researchers, the future extension specialists, and making sure that we have strong and vibrant education programs is going to pay great dividends down the road.

Dr. NAVE. And I would just like to add, too, thank you, Congresswoman Plaskett, for that question.

In addition to scholarship, it is also about pipeline development. The continued support of our extension efforts through 4-H and the like, ag discovery programs, to educate students about the many career opportunities in ag, and making sure that our programs are providing more, a much broader scope of the career options in ag, and that the programs are transitioning to some of the more sexy areas of ag, such as drone technology, AI, because all of those career fields, opportunities are available to students. They just may not be aware. So, in addition to scholarships, it is about program development, pipeline development, and making sure that they have access to internships and cooperative experiences so they have a greater, more in-depth understanding of what their career choice is all about.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

The other issue that I think is very important, and that other Members on the Committee have also been discussing, is what my university, the University of the Virgin Islands, which as a historically Black university, supports local students in rural communities with the focus on socially disadvantaged communities. They have struggled in the past to get matching fund waivers from NIFA following natural disasters. Like many 1890 institutions, they often fall short of receiving the one-to-one matching fund requirements from local legislatures, and which oftentimes, do not have funding to be able to do that.

Recognizing that this is primarily a state and local issue, how does this funding shortfall impact schools within your system, or does it? Have you seen that happen? How can we work with our state partners to best address the matching fund issue to ensure that our students are supported and equity is maintained between institutions?

Dr. JONES. I will be glad to address that, Congresswoman Plaskett, initially and allow my colleagues to address it further.

In the State of Georgia, we are very fortunate to have the one-to-one match. That has not always been the case, but I can tell you there is a significant difference in our ability to serve our community, and the way in which we can serve our community when you have the one-to-one match there and you are not returning resources, or requesting a waiver.

I would say that, I think it is critically important, the part of the provision that is in the new farm bill that really calls on USDA to report those states so at least there is information that is shared widely with Congress for those states that are not matching the funds.

As I mentioned earlier in my testimony, the 1890 system has tremendous capacity, and when you are not receiving minimally the one-to-one match, it really shortchanges our communities. And so, I think this is vitally important that we address this and Congress does take a look at what is happening, because I believe that there are several states that are still not matching at the one-to-one level.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

I am very much out of time, so I would now invite Mr. Thompson for your 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON. Madam Chair, thank you so much, and thank you to each one of our witnesses for being on the panel today, but more importantly, for your leadership at your respective institutions of learning. It is greatly appreciated. I really appreciate you sharing your testimony.

I mentioned in my opening statement the wins that we were able to secure in the 2018 Farm Bill, and I know my friends on the Appropriations Committee have been committed to getting the land-grant system, especially the 1890 land-grants, additional resources.

But looking to future years, what can the House Committee on Agriculture do to help you continue to meet your mission to your students and to the agriculture industry, and quite frankly, to rural America, who benefits to a large degree in the end? And this question really is open to the entire panel, for anyone who would like to provide a response.

Dr. ABDULLAH. Thank you, sir. Thank you very much for your question.

As you just mentioned, we are very excited and thankful for the support that we have gotten from Congress and from the Federal Government, but there are some places that we believe that increasing resources at our institutions can increase the return on the investment that we have had.

One of those ways, again, we receive about 25.8 percent of the funds that—excuse me. We are authorized to receive up to 30 percent of the total Hatch funds or Evans-Allen funds, which currently right now we receive 25.8 percent of those funds. On the extension side, we are authorized to receive 20 percent of the extension funds that the 1862s receive, and we receive about 18 percent of that.

And so, I think first—and when we look at our capacity funds and our ability to provide capacity for our states as 1890 institutions, we will really look first to see what we can do to close that gap. Closing the gap of 4.2 percent on ag research would bring our appropriation levels from about \$67 million to about \$77 million, and closing the two percent gap on the 1890 cooperative extension program would bring our appropriation levels from about \$57 million to \$63 million. I think that would be one of the big things that we could do to help increase the impact of our institutions.

Second, and that was part of the question that came before, is how do we continue—we have about seven universities that aren't receiving the one-to-one match from the states, so better coordination with us and the states to see what we can do to help the states provide that critical resource to our institutions would go a long way.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you. Thank you for that input.

Either of the additional two panelists like to weigh in on that question?

Dr. NAVE. Thank you for the question. Great question.

Just adding to what President Abdullah just mentioned, expanding or fully funding the Centers of Excellence. We have three centers that were funded, but having a center at each of the 19 institutions would go a long way.

In our extension areas, we do great work and work well with our 1862 partners; however, we have counties that we are not able to serve because we don't have—or the counties—it is a systemic matter, chicken and egg—have the resources from the counties in order to bring in the agents from the university to assist. And so, being able to fully support in that area so all the counties that are needed, we can do a better job of covering those low-resource communities are two other areas that I would add to the support.

And on a more long-term and broader scale, looking at facilities. We do well with what we have, but if we are to continue to expand and meet the changing and dynamic workforce needs of this country in the agricultural sector, being able to have or acquire state-of-the-art facilities or renovation of facilities is definitely going to be a must so that our students continue to receive the high-quality education to prepare them for the workforce.

Mr. THOMPSON. Very good. Thank you.

Dr. Jones, any thoughts regarding what the—

Dr. JONES. Well, the two panelists did a great job, but I would echo the facilities support that is needed. We have aging facilities. I think bringing our facilities into the 21st century, either updating them or new facilities that would be very important for the growth of our institutions and for the support that we can provide throughout our states.

Mr. THOMPSON. Very good. Well, once again, thank you to all three of you for your continued leadership, and the benefits that you bring to the students and communities.

Madam Chair, I yield back.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much, Ranking Member.

Congresswoman Schrier, your 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHRIER. Thank you so much.

I come from the State of Washington, so this is my first education into 1890 land-grant universities, and I am so grateful for the education and to learn about what you are doing with research and how much food nutrition research you are doing, at a time when we have vacancies at the USDA when we need more extension researchers, I am incredibly grateful. I am also incredibly grateful that at a time when our food nutritional density and composition is changing with the changing climate that you are at the forefront of that.

I just have a tangential question, and I don't even know if this is in the realm of what you feel comfortable speaking about. But I don't have a great sense of how many of your students go on to become farmers and ranchers. And my question is about this. We hear a lot about farmers of color not having the same access to loans, to loan forgiveness, to some of the financial help that other farmers get. We also know that our farmers are aging. A lot of

them pass their farms down, but the farmers that I meet in my district who are young, they have a lot of trouble buying land. They are leasing land. They just get on the same foot. And I am thinking about this in terms of what has happened with housing in this country, and when you get locked out of actually owning that land, what does that mean for your future?

I also just wondered if you could talk—I know it is tangential—if you could talk about that a little bit, if you could talk about if you are working in that realm, and how we can support your students if they go on to become farmers and ranchers?

Dr. ABDULLAH. Thank you very much, Congresswoman Schrier. I very much appreciate your question.

There are some, of course, answers I could give anecdotally. I will tell you that there is a large percentage of our students that come from farmer and rancher backgrounds. Many of them have chosen Virginia State, and I imagine many of our 1890s—because, if you will, it is the family business and they are interested in going into the family business.

As a matter of fact, I might argue, again, without statistics, that it is actually more of a challenge to get young people to go into food and ag sciences who have not previously been, if you will, previously had the experience in food and ag sciences. And so, many of our students have already had some experience in food and ag science.

On the other question, we have a lot of experts in our 1890 community that are working on answering the questions that you put forth just now, in terms of how do we make sure that Black and minority farmers have access to capital, have access to the resources that they need in order to build their business. I regret that we may not be able to give you definitive answers to some of those questions, but we stand at the ready to provide the answers for Congress to be able to have an impact on policy as we continue to move forward, to make sure that the food and ag science world is an equitable world.

Dr. NAVE. I would add to that. Thank you, Congresswoman Schrier, for that question.

We continue to try to expand our partnerships in order to address those very issues and concerns that you just raised. We are working with our local Farm Bureau, and looking at developing an apprenticeship program in order to encourage and develop and build a pipeline for students who may have an interest or who come from farming backgrounds, particularly being here in the State of Mississippi.

But I also would like to highlight that our extension program has a unique program that was funded by the State of Mississippi to help small and disadvantaged farmers gain access to capital and technical assistance who otherwise would not be able to obtain credit through traditional financial credit sources. It is our Small Farm Loan Program that assists small farmers who endeavor to start new farm operations.

This is an area that I think is a niche for Alcorn State University that we are very much willing to have further discussions and share some of our lessons learned, and how that program has worked to benefit small farmers here in the State of Mississippi.

But, I believe you addressed partnerships with our local Farm Bureaus, through state legislatures, as well as working with some of our own campus vendor partners, such as our food services, to expand opportunities for students and to address these very real issues that that you brought to light.

Dr. JONES. I don't know if the time will allow for a response, given it is 10 seconds; but, the youth development piece becomes really critical, and focusing in on how we work with young people through 4-H or through other development programs to expose them. I can't give you a number offhand of how many move immediately into the farming world or going back into that space, but I will say that President Abdullah is absolutely correct in that we have a much greater chance with those individuals who have been exposed. I think the scholarship program is going to help tremendously as we move forward.

I do think we have to do even a better job of helping youth to understand diversity of agriculture, and that agriculture actually is everything. And so, how do we make that, if you will, sexy to them.

But I would just go on to say, last, in terms of the technical support, that is a space that all of us, through our cooperative extension units, are doing a great job of providing that kind of technical experience to the limited resource farmers. And that is something we are very proud of, and that is something we do a great job as opposed to what is happening in the 1862 environment.

Ms. SCHRIER. Thank you all very much.

The CHAIR. Congressman LaMalfa, thank you. I am not sure if Congressman LaMalfa is with us. I see his icon there.

Mr. LAMALFA. I am right here, ma'am.

The CHAIR. Great.

Mr. LAMALFA. I am reaching things here. So, how are things?

The CHAIR. Very good, very good. Thank you for being with us. Do you have questions for our witnesses?

Mr. LAMALFA. Yes, I just wanted to go over one real quick with Dr. Jones. Is that okay?

The CHAIR. Of course. It is your time.

Mr. LAMALFA. Okay.

Just looking at the issues with campuses and the opening of them or reopening this year, I wonder what were some of the biggest issues you were able to get by with at Fort Valley State this fall in reopening and making things continue to work on a rural campus like that?

Dr. JONES. Well, thank you, Congressman LaMalfa, for that question.

As you can imagine, it was a tremendous challenge trying to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone, not just our students, faculty, and staff, but also visitors as well who came up to the campus community.

As I mentioned earlier, the support we received through the CARES Act funding was enormous. We would not have been able to stand up our technology infrastructure in the way that we did. And even though we were in the face-to-face environment, we still had to move a lot of our services and programs into the virtual space because of the size of the groups. And I will say that with

the utilization of that technology actually what we saw was a much larger number of students participating.

The students did a great job of taking advantage of the resources we had in place; but, just increasing our testing capacity to ensure that we can determine where the hotspots were and we could mitigate further spread of the virus, that was just really challenging staying on top of that. But our staff and faculty did a great job, as long as we kept them away from the parties, things went reasonably well.

But, we learned a lot and as we put our plans in for the spring semester, I think there are a number of changes that we have made that will enhance the spring face-to-face term.

Mr. LAMALFA. How has that affected, Dr. Jones, you were mentioning, a bit earlier, your research you are working on with animals and some of the synthetic products they need, or that are used, and that you had success, according to my notes, on reducing usage of synthetic drugs in order to keep animal health.

And so, has your research been able to move fairly—

Dr. JONES. Yes, because of the PPE—I mean, we obviously had to put a lot of things in place for the researchers who were spending time in the labs, and early on it may have been a challenge. But as we learn more throughout the pandemic, I think we were able to move our research agenda forward. And, it is just—everyone had to learn how to operate and/or navigate in this new environment, but as I said in my opening remarks, quite frankly, we have learned a lot during this pandemic that actually will help us to become even more efficient as an institution and how we can leverage this technology, going forward.

But the research continued to move forward, slower at the early stages, but we have been able to move things along as we learn more. You know, as we started out early on to our community, we don't know what we don't know, and as we learned more, we got better and better in this environment.

But we are still going to be challenged in the spring semester.

Mr. LAMALFA. Yes. Well, hang in there, sir. I hope by spring that we have a lot better handle on the entire situation.

So, Madam Chair, I will yield back. Thank you, and thank you, Dr. Jones, for your time with us here today.

Dr. JONES. You are welcome.

The CHAIR. Thank you so much for that information, and we do wish the best for our students. Those who are operating remotely, that has its own unique challenges for them and their families, and the health of our students everywhere operating in person as well, we are very prayerful about that, and wish the best. You all have such an enormous task in making sure that not only the students, but your faculty, staff, everyone stays safe on campuses.

We now have Congresswoman Chellie Pingree for your 5 minutes. Thank you so much for your leadership on so many issues related to agriculture, and your work on the Appropriations Committee, which does so much of the work for appropriating the funds for these fantastic programs for the 1890s.

Ms. PINGREE. Great. Well, thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for holding this hearing. Like Representative Schrier, we don't have an 1890 institution in our state, so it has been fascinating to

hear from you and read the background, and I really appreciate having this hearing and my colleagues joining in on this.

I also wanted to just recognize when Representative Thompson asked you some of the questions about funding. As the Chair mentioned, I am on the Appropriations Committee, and would be happy to follow up with all of you at another time about how to make sure that we are pushing for the funding levels that you are asking for. I have been a long-time supporter of research. I am a huge fan of cooperative extension. So, to hear that there isn't parity on those issues is troubling to me, and I would be happy to work with you on that.

And also, the understanding that—I think one of you mentioned that seven of the 19 1890 institutions did not receive state parity, the one-to-one match, and that concerns me as well. Given that states are suffering such revenue shortfalls, it is a very contentious issue in Congress about whether we will give them more funding. But my guess is, as they experience shortfalls, it will make it even more difficult for them to meet that match. So, I would love to talk to you more about that.

But let me just ask you a couple of specifics. Dr. Abdullah, you wrote Congress back in April that one of the immediate steps Congress could do would be to urge the United States Department of Agriculture to release your appropriated Fiscal Year 2020 funding as soon as possible. I know Representative Alma Adams sent a letter on this, but I am interested to have an update on that. When did the USDA ultimately release your 2020 funding, and did they issue some guidance about the carry-over authority?

Dr. ABDULLAH. Thank you very much, Congresswoman. I appreciate your question.

The funds were released, and we did get parity as relates to the carry-forward issue. I really appreciate you bringing up and helping to champion parity with our states, and to make sure that we can get all of our institutions to have quality access to the match. So, thank you.

Ms. PINGREE. Sure. I mean, I really appreciate the work that you are doing to help our next generation of farmers. It is so critically important with the average age of our farmers going up. And like I said, I would be happy to work with Mr. Bishop on that. I am sure it is something that he strongly supports.

Another interesting question for me is there have been a lot of challenges around the National Institute of Food and Agriculture—NIFA, it is called—at the USDA. It is the arm of the Federal Government that provides land-grants their capacity funds, and administers competitive grants. I have been really concerned about the relocation, the delays, the loss of staff. So, if any of the witnesses have a comment just on how has your experience been in dealing with NIFA in the relocation? Do you think the agency has that capacity to provide you with the support that you need? If any of you want to comment.

Dr. JONES. I will be glad to address it, at least from our perspective.

You know, it is no secret. I think that things were, because of the move, certainly a little slower, but that was to be expected. In terms of response time, we know it is a great challenge. I think the

bigger loss is the loss of the knowledge and some of that expertise that was there, and also just knowing who to call. You know, we had the luxury of knowing who to call.

But, it certainly has been a challenge. I think they have been working tirelessly trying to get up to speed to support our institutions, and we have had great collaboration with the senior team, if you will, and have tried to work through any of the challenges that we face.

But, it was expected. I guess what will be most interesting is how we are able to move the needle forward next year and will we be able to pick up that response time and the knowledge base that will be needed to support all of us.

Ms. PINGREE. Any other comments?

Dr. NAVE. I appreciate your question.

Likewise, to add to President Jones, the delayed communication has delayed some of our programming and our ability to move funding. Things that used to take a month take 3 or 4 months, and so we are concerned as we begin to restaff, which we anticipate will move some of these challenges off the table, that there is a focus on diversity to make sure that we have equitable representation amongst the staffers that they are bringing on board.

Ms. PINGREE. Great. Well, thank you again for your presentations today, and I yield back, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

At this time, I would like to ask my very good friend, Congressman Rodney Davis, for his 5 minutes. Rodney—

Mr. DAVIS. Hang on, you cut out.

The CHAIR. You were smiling as if you knew I was going to say it was you, and then I was going to say we were good friends.

Mr. DAVIS. Hey, I am excited and very accepting of that gesture, because we are good friends. But I knew because I usually have to sit next to Doug LaMalfa, and I am on his left side, which is his bad ear. So, it is difficult to talk to him in the hearing room.

The CHAIR. You have to pass notes.

Mr. DAVIS. You know what, we will, and then we will probably get chastised by you at the next hearing.

But hey, look. I hope all the witnesses know how much fun we have together in a bipartisan way on this Committee, because we are excited to be able to talk about what your universities mean to our entire higher education system, especially when it comes to ag. And I have really been focusing in my career here on ag research. I am proud to have formed—helped form the Ag Research Caucus with another really good friend on this Committee, Jimmy Panetta. Jimmy, I don't want to scare the witnesses, but if it is any consolation to each of you, Jimmy looks worse in person than he does on video. So, you will be fine when you see him. Don't jump when he gets to his questions.

But, the Ag Research Caucus and the 13 colleges, universities, and community colleges that I represent in Illinois, they include the University of Illinois, another land-grant institution, that has been partnering with Tuskegee University as an active partner in the AIFARMS project, the Artificial Intelligence for Future Agricultural Resilience, Management, and Sustainability Institute. And that is the U of I's \$20 million new AI institute that is supported

by NIFA and the National Science Foundation. And this project, working together, is going to bolster technologies that contribute to production practices, digital agriculture, and also help support women and minority farmers to research on livestock operation, autonomous farming, and also soil and health environment.

But I am very concerned because I represent so many universities. I have three kids, and one of those universities that I represent, I know how COVID has impacted their lives, the students, and also the university's capabilities.

And speaking of ag research, the only question I have here, and I will throw it open to whomever wants to answer first. How has COVID impacted some of your ag research projects? Has it delayed them? Has it made it harder to move the needle forward on important ag research at your universities? And go ahead and whoever wants to answer first, just unmute yourself.

Dr. ABDULLAH. Thank you, Congressman Davis.

The answer to your question, of course, is quite diverse. There are some of our faculty, some of our researchers who are involved in clinical research that may only include a few people that are able to conduct their research by and large the way that they were conducting it before COVID. The vast majority of researchers at Virginia State have been impacted by COVID-19, and particularly those that are doing a more applied and applicable research that are in the communities, working with farmers and ranchers, now understanding that you have to maintain a certain level of distance. We have to make sure that we keep everybody safe.

It has been a challenge across the entire research enterprise, not just in ag, and not just, of course, at Virginia State, and as you mentioned, University of Illinois. And it is a challenge that all universities are trying to do their best to meet.

Additionally, the lack of travel. As 1890 institutions, we have a lot of collaborations in and amongst ourselves, but also with other 1862s like University of Illinois, and the lack of travel has meant that researchers being able to get access and hands-on access to other researchers' research has been quite a bit more difficult.

And so, this is a new world. It is, of course, a research challenge isn't any different from the challenge in a classroom. It isn't different from the challenges that we all face with the pandemic, but it has been a challenge and it is something that we are going to continue to have to look at.

Mr. DAVIS. Great, great. Dr. Nave?

Dr. NAVE. Yes, I would just add in addition to what President—and I appreciate the question.

It has had an impact. We have been able to adjust as time has moved on, and we have learned some things. But overall, we have slowed in our production. In addition to what we do in terms of partnerships with other 1862 or 1890 institutions, but also the research opportunities or the research projects with other ag-related agencies. If those agencies have shut down, we have not been able to complete some of those projects, and we have had to do various extensions.

But we are hopeful that as we move into the next year, we continue to learn more about the pandemic and how to make the ad-

justments that we are able to carry out the outcomes of our projects, but overall, the research has definitely been impacted.

And one area that I would throw out there with the restrictions and the social distance, it creates additional challenges in our facility spaces, and how the researchers are able—or how many people they can have in at one time in order to conduct the research, and whether or not we are able to or have the additional resources to renovate or modify the research space to be able to carry out the research. So, it is has been a challenge, but we continue to work through it.

Mr. DAVIS. Great. I see I am out of time. Sorry, Dr. Jones. But I appreciate the opportunity to be here, Madam Chair. I apologize, I have to go to another hearing, so forgive me, and I will be happy to read the record later.

Thanks, everyone. I yield back.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much. Our next Member is Congressman Panetta of California, your 5 minutes. Thank you.

Mr. PANETTA. Thank you, Chair Plaskett. I appreciate this opportunity. Let me get to some better light because of the comments of my good friend, Rodney Davis. It won't make it better for you, but at least you will see some aspects besides the outline of my big nose and big ears.

Look, this says a lot that in just looking at the make-up of the Brady Bunch boxes that I am looking at right now, and the make-up of the membership on BHR. It says a lot about Chair Plaskett's leadership, but it also says a lot about the make-up of the Agriculture Committee, and our concern with these issues that we are listening to today, as well as the research issues that we are all focused on for our districts. You have a number of Members who are literally from all over the country that are on this Committee, from California all the way up to Maine, and that says a lot. You know, even someone like me coming from the Central Coast of California, as Chair Plaskett likes to say, the Salad Bowl of the world, I do not have any land-grant institutions in my district, and a few Members on this Subcommittee don't. But the fact that we want to hear about these, because we know how important they are to our agriculture, to our research for agriculture, I think says a lot about this Committee. And so, I just have to point that out to you, and how much we appreciate you being here and taking the time to prepare and to present your information to all of us so that we can learn from you.

As I said, I come from the Central Coast of California, and we have a lot of specialty crops there. It is not the types of crops that my good friend, Rodney Davis, although he does have some specialty crops in his district, just very little, he has mostly the types of crops where you just send machines through. We don't. We have the types of crops where it takes people. It takes people to get in there and to have that human discernment that technology actually hasn't caught up with. So, we have yet to mechanize appropriately when it comes to the harvesting of our specialty crops.

But I also know that, and as you probably are well aware of, in our district and in our colleges that we have, two 4 year and four 2 year colleges there, we have a lot of—our curriculum is a lot

about farmworkers. It is a lot about Cesar Chavez. It is a lot about immigration.

And so, I was just wondering if that plays any role in your curriculum? Do you talk about the contributions of farmworkers to our agriculture in your curriculum?

Dr. ABDULLAH. Congressman Panetta, thank you very much for that question.

The answer is yes. We think it is really important that our students understand not just what it takes to move the food and agricultural industry, but to understand the history of food and agriculture and how people—in most cases, underrepresented or those immigrants or former slaves or slaves, the roles that those people played in the building of the food and ag system here in the United States of America. So yes, sir, that is very much an important part of our curriculum.

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Jones, would you agree?

Dr. JONES. Yes, absolutely, and I think that piece is very important to helping those who plan to go into these careers that they have an understanding of the history. And so, I think that part is very vital, and probably something that is very special to—and unique to each of our institutions.

Mr. PANETTA. And I apologize for calling you Mister. Dr. Jones, thank you.

Dr. Nave, would you agree?

Dr. NAVE. Yes, I do agree, and it is not about just giving them the introduction, but making sure that we weave it throughout the curriculum, as well as in any co-curricular activities that we put on board. Ag is really important to this institution, as well as to the state, and so we work to make sure that students are well educated.

But I would also add that in our extension as we are working in the communities with our 4-H programs, we also include that education in those program areas as well to make sure that we are responsible in educating our citizenry.

Mr. PANETTA. And obviously—and I am getting close to the end of my time, but real quickly.

Obviously with your institutions and your curriculum and everything that you are doing, you are doing a great job getting people into your colleges. But my question has to come with what are the barriers once they graduate college? What you are seeing now, and what are you doing to help them subsequent to their education? Anybody want to take my last 12 seconds?

Dr. ABDULLAH. I think it is very important, sir, that we have a sense of lifelong learning, that we continue to educate our young people to be in the high demand careers so they can get going right away. And then, of course, part of that is kind of COVID-related. As COVID has started to hit our country, how do we adapt to make sure that people are ready for the new workplace? So, we are all committed to making sure our kids are prepared.

Mr. PANETTA. Thank you, Dr. Abdullah.

Madam Chair, I yield back. Thank you.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much, and as you heard, we really have Members from all over the country.

I would now invite the Member from Indiana, Mr. Baird, for his 5 minutes.

Mr. BAIRD. Well thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity, and it is fascinating, because of my ag background, to hear the direction that the universities have taken. And so, I certainly appreciate all the witnesses being here.

I have a couple of questions that might be worthwhile, one of those being, Dr. Nave, you mentioned 4-H was an important part of the program. I think you also mentioned that artificial intelligence and drones. So, would you mind elaborating a little more on how you integrate your program with the extension service? And I am a great supporter, just as Representative Pingree is, of the extension. So, I would like to have comments from the witnesses on that area.

Dr. NAVE. Thank you, Congressman Baird, for your question. I appreciate it.

4-H is a very vital program here at the university, and so we have been working to extend and expand the number of 4-H locations that we have throughout the state so that we have agents who are available and ready and continuously recruiting students into those programs. We see it as vital to our pipeline, to the workforce pipeline in moving those students from 4-H into ag discovery, into viable careers in the agriculture area.

In making sure that the research—we have research-informed and research-based information. Our extension agents work hand-in-hand with our faculty and staff so that we can translate what we are learning in our research areas, in the classrooms, back out into the communities with our 4-H programs.

It has been a significant push to expand the number of 4-H partnerships that we have throughout the state.

Mr. BAIRD. Dr. Jones, do you have comment?

Dr. Abdullah?

Dr. ABDULLAH. I do. I do. We are very excited about our 4-H program. It is one of the, in my mind, highlights of our extension enterprise. I work very closely with Virginia Tech, the Virginia Cooperative Extension, our two 4-H and youth development agents are Dr. Chantel Wilson and Dr. Maurice Smith, who do an incredible, incredible job of developing material for our students here. We want to make sure that as an 1890, as Virginia State University, that we are providing those quality opportunities for all young people, making sure that whether those who come from rural or urban environments, whether they are Black or white, they get an opportunity to participate in 4-H. So, we are very active.

Mr. BAIRD. Dr. Jones, are you—

Dr. JONES. What I will say, and I echo both Presidents' comments, but in terms of your question around the sort of technology or precision agriculture, artificial intelligence and big data, the technology piece is one that is vital to moving forward in this area. One of our centers that we hope to have funded in the future is the Center for Excellence in Emerging Technologies, which Fort Valley is well positioned to provide tremendous support in this area. But, that is a space that many of us are providing great support, but we need the expanded resources in order to accelerate what we are doing in these areas.

So, that is something that we think it would be important moving forward, the additional funding for the Centers of Excellence is critical.

Mr. BAIRD. Thank you. I have one other question.

The discussion about the ability to get into farming, and when you look at conventional agriculture that we have in the Midwest, it is almost prohibitive for a young farmer to buy the land, buy the machinery, and get in. So, the challenge for young people to get into production agriculture is a tremendous challenge all across the industry.

But I will say, my observation at this point—and I will let you to comment—well, I have only have 10 seconds, so I guess my observation would be with restaurants and someone wanting to know exactly where their food is coming from, there are more opportunities today for young people to get into some of these specialty items than I have seen in the past years. And so, if you want to—I am out of time, I guess. So, just nod your head if you agree. If you don't, just shake your head no.

I thank you, and I yield back.

Good deal. Thank you.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much, and that is a topic that we have talked about so much.

Congresswoman Xochitl Torres Small, so good to see you, and thank you, and your questions coming from New Mexico.

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Thank you so much, Madam Chair, New Mexico State University is our state's land-grant institution. They are also a Hispanic-serving institution, and so what we have been talking about, about the importance of diversity for the future of our ag economy is crucial. And a clear example of that is right now facing COVID-19, because our cooperative extension service has been able to use existing routes of communication with key groups of individuals who are especially vulnerable in the wake of COVID-19. Also in the industry, in the ag industry, that is so vital as we face the supply chain challenges that we are seeing, to reaching and serving our entire country.

Dr. Nave, I would love to hear from you any work that you have done to help communicate as a trusted resource the challenges of COVID-19, and support our ag economy and our diverse populations.

Dr. NAVE. Thank you, Congresswoman, for that question. I appreciate it, great question.

We have utilized our extension network in order to translate information about COVID-19. Some of our program has been specifically focused on helping parents on how to explain the different guidelines associated with COVID-19, being a resource for parents who may not have internet access, that they can come to some of our centers so that their students can complete their homework, that they can participate in classroom activities. Our extension agents in ag have also partnered with our School of Nursing to be able to go around in our communities to provide healthcare service and address the health disparities issues. But there is—we have a mobile bus, a mobile clinic that we are able to use and partner with ag.

But, I will tell you that there is an opportunity for us to expand. I think this came up in an earlier question. Our 1862 partners have the resources to be in more communities and we know that there are more low-resource communities that we need to be at to provide these additional services to address the health disparities, the food insecurities, the knowledge gap. But the resources, right now, our resources only allow us to be in 19 counties. So, as we are able to procure additional resources, we can do a much more thorough job and be of more benefit to more of the low-resource communities in the State of Mississippi to bring and address some of these matters that are being discussed today.

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Dr. Nave, I am so glad you brought up additional resources. I wholly agree, and of course, funds through NIFA is a fundamental part. We have talked about that.

But another part of it is I had the chance to work with Congressman Johnson on H.R. 6956, Farming Support to States Act of 2020, which would get money directly to state farming agencies, as well as our cooperative extension services. It provides another—especially in the midst of a crisis, an opportunity to directly fund our cooperative extensions.

Dr. Jones, you mentioned in your testimony—in your written testimony some of the work you have done on meat packing plants to help address supply chain issues. I would love to hear how additional resources going directly to our cooperative extension services could help Georgia, and helps our supply chain network.

Dr. JONES. Thank you very much, Congresswoman, and that is an area that the pandemic actually put a significant spotlight on as we—the COVID challenges that we have throughout the state and some of the processing centers. It created some real challenges, particularly for some of those small farmers. But what we learned during the pandemic is that even mid-size and larger farmers were impacted tremendously. This gave us an opportunity to work with Congressman Bishop and some of our local—our Commissioner of Agriculture. The need for us to expand our processing facility for red meat, and we have been staffing up to many of our processors that—not processors, but our farmers were sending their meat to be processed across state lines. And so, in order for us to help meet that need, we had to pause for a moment to staff up so we can start supporting this important endeavor. And that food is not going to waste as a result of not having access.

So, we see that as being very important, and we are looking forward to continuing to expand that. But we need more resources. For example, our meat processing facility, we need to enhance the cooler space in order for us to support—we could do more if we had a larger cooler space. So, indeed, a very important priority for our university, and I appreciate our staff for stepping up during these challenging times.

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Thank you. My time has expired.

The CHAIR. Thank you so much.

Congressman Johnson, it is now your 5 minutes. Thank you for waiting patiently for your opportunity to speak. I see your camera is on, and he may have stepped away from his seat. Well, we will come back to Mr. Johnson.

Congressman Lawson, “big Al.”

Mr. LAWSON. Okay, thank you. It is so great to see you.

The CHAIR. It is good to see you, sir. Thank you for all your work in Florida and the capital of Tallahassee, on behalf of all these—oh, hold on, Al. Mr. Johnson came back. Now you're going to get screamed at. I told you the day wouldn't end before that happened.

Mr. JOHNSON. I chose a particularly inopportune time to go to the bathroom. I had the list. I knew when I was up, and I thought there was enough room between Xochitl and me, and there wasn't.

The CHAIR. Me and your teenagers. We will get you.

Mr. JOHNSON. Exactly. Well, I apologize to our distinguished panel—

The CHAIR. Please, go right ahead. You are up for your 5 minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, thank you very much, ma'am.

I do think the testimony has been fantastic, and I know we have talked a bit about how some of us are from parts of the country that don't have this group of 1890s. And so, for me, it has been—I mean, honestly, to hear the Presidents of these institutions talk about their efforts to robustly build this equity in agriculture has been an absolute treat.

I want to weave some other institutions into the conversation as well, because there is an opportunity for us to learn, and clearly, it is not just the job of the 1890s to build this equity in agriculture for traditionally disadvantaged students, and so it has been wonderful.

I mean, in South Dakota, we have a land-grant university that is an 1862 institution, but they understand the importance of stepping up and being a part of this societal change as well. And so, they have the Wokini Initiative, which the New Beginnings Program is an outcropping of that. Wokini started at South Dakota State University. Our appropriators have invested in the New Beginnings Program, which is an expansion of this program, which really attempts to identify Native American students and to recruit them to this land-grant university, and to retain them. It is just critically important in states like South Dakota with a sizable Native American population. And so, I think that is kind of similar to the kind of work that the 1890s are doing.

But I also want to ask the Presidents for their advice, because we have 1994s, the Tribal colleges in South Dakota, a number of them, and so for those of us who want to continue to support the mission of these 1994s and in the area of agriculture—I mean, I would ask our esteemed panelists, what advice do you have for us so that we can support these Tribal colleges?

Dr. ABDULLAH. Thank you very much, Congressman Johnson, for your question. I think it is a fantastic question.

We all partner well, I believe, with our 1862 partner, and we understand that the work that we do, while we lead the work, and while of course, it is part of our engrained mission, and it is really everyone's work, and that everyone has to really be a part of that work. So, I appreciate you bringing that to the table.

In terms of how we support the 1890s and the 1994s, is to look at them as the primary leaders on certain aspects of projects in their respective states. I think for so many, they look to the 1862s to really be the leader of much of the work that happens in the

state, and that the 1890s or sometimes the 1994s become a secondary player for some projects. For projects that specifically deal with the inequities of the states, specifically deal with making sure that marginalized people are engaged and involved. It is critically important to make sure that the 1890s and the 1994s are the leads, that the funds are invested in an appropriate and an equitable manner, and to allow your institutions and our institutions, to really have that opportunity to do that.

So, that would be my recommendation.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, thank you.

Other panelists?

Dr. NAVE. I would thank you for the question. Great question.

I concur with the President. Meaningful partnerships and collaboration so that we can cross-pollinate onto having a clear understanding of mission and where there is compatibility, such that you are not pulling people out of their niches or extending them beyond what the capabilities or resources are, and then an understanding that some of these partnerships, that there are more resources, may need to go to the 1890 or the 1994s, simply from a leverage perspective or because of the inequity that has historically existed, those institutions may not be at the same place. So, in that partnership, defining equitable distribution of resources beyond the dollar amount, but looking at the impact of how that funding is going to help advance the partnership and the collaboration so that both institutions are able to see some measurable gains.

Dr. JONES. The only thing I would add is that I think one of the things that is often not known is how much we collaborate as 1890 system with the 1862s and other institutions across the country. Many of our research projects, one that I mentioned in my submission, spoke about multiple institutions, over 30 scientists being engaged. I think that is our pathway forward. It is the opportunity for us to continue to collaborate and partner. The President is absolutely correct that we all have to work within those boundaries or where our expertise is, but solving today's and tomorrow's problems is going to require greater collaboration from our institutions. And quite frankly, that is something that I believe the 1890s do very well, probably better than most. And I think there are opportunities for further engagement.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, thank you, Dr. Jones, and thank you, Madam Chair, for your indulgence on my time.

I would just close by thanking the Presidents of these institutions. I mean, clearly, our country is strongest when we are providing education. Clearly, that is the hallmark. That is the key, and we have a better nation because of the tremendous students that your institutions have turned out, decade after decade, and just honestly, thank you.

The CHAIR. Thank you so much for your questions, as well as your remarks.

Congressman Lawson, your 5 minutes. Thank you.

Mr. LAWSON. Okay. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It is a real privilege to be here with you, and to have and welcome our guests to the Committee.

I am a Florida A&M University graduate, and I grew up in the country and grew up farming, and my father-in-law taught in agri-

culture at FAMU, and probably his son, who finished from Tuskegee also at Maryland Eastern Shore, Henry Brooks. I am sure that some of you all know Henry Brooks.

And so, it has been my mission to make sure the 1890 institutions get what they deserve for the remarkable work that they have done over all these years.

One of the questions that I have, and this will be for everyone—I have been concerned about recruiting and retaining students and faculty is the key need in the 1890 institutions. In the various research missions how has COVID-19 pandemic impacted your ability to attract both students and faculty, provide them with resources to continue conducting their research? And that is open to everyone.

Dr. ABDULLAH. Thank you, Congressman Lawson. It is good to see you, sir. Of course, I did time at your alma mater, and so I am a fan of Florida A&M University.

I wanted to say this. First, I want to—I am thankful the funds, the CARES Act that came to higher education and came to our 1890 institutions, because those funds went a long way to making sure that during this very difficult time, this very difficult financial time, that we were able to do the best we could to make sure that we could retain our talent, our faculty and staff at Virginia State and across our 1890s. And also, so that we could maintain our programs so that we could recruit students into our programs.

As we continue to go forward with the kind of financial uncertainty, we remain thankful for any future funding that comes through for higher education and for our 1890s to make sure, again, that we are able to keep people working, keep talent in the building, and keep students coming to our institutions.

So, thank you very much. The work of Congress has been incredible to helping us continue to go forward.

Mr. LAWSON. Right. Anyone else care to comment?

Dr. NAVE. Thank you, Congressman Lawson, for the question. Great question.

It has been a challenge. We did start our freshman class off as smaller than what has historically been the case, but as we continue to look at our recruitment efforts and understanding what works and being more intentional, the funding that was provided that we are extremely thankful for to recruit the students through the USDA Scholars Program was very instrumental in assisting the university with being able to attract and retain the students. It helps make the educational experience affordable, and they don't leave saddled with the student loan debt that makes—when they start their first job, their income is prohibitive.

In terms of faculty and staff, more on the way of research. It is—even if we are able to be competitive in terms of salaries or close to competitive, having the infrastructure and the facilities that these researchers are able to conduct state-of-the-art innovative research becomes the next challenge for our institutions. Having resources to secure post-docs and to support graduate students in the lab.

Other areas that we have seen across other fields where there has been additional funding opportunities or programs that those different departments can attack are used to attract staffing. So, it

is a multi-faceted approach between scholarship dollars, retention dollars, and facility infrastructure in order to make sure that we keep the highest quality talent in our institutions.

Mr. LAWSON. Okay, thank you.

And, since the Chair only gave me 10 minutes, I am going to try to get in another question.

Anyway, for addressing food insecurity and educating our ranchers and farmers on future threats to their crops, I am very proud of what our ability in 1890 to make an impact in the community through their existing services.

What way do you foresee that COVID-19 pandemic having an impact on how 1890 land-grant institution can positively support their local communities? Because, really, in a district that stretches around 300 miles and a lot of rural areas in between, and we have a lot of food insecurities, so it is becoming very important. So, I just wanted to see what any of you all in the time that I have left can comment on that.

Dr. JONES. I would just say that certainly the greatest challenge I think we face with extension is the travel bans, and our sort of inability to be as visible as we have had to in the past, and the sort of technology challenges that we face, realizing that not all communities have the same access to even the technology. It is easy enough to say, "Hey, we will just move everything to the virtual space," but that is assuming that the person on the other line has the ability to receive the communication.

Mr. LAWSON. I am going to cut you off for a minute because I really need a response on that. What can we do on this Committee to help these universities more?

Dr. JONES. Well, what I would say—there has been a theme around infrastructure. I think that is critical moving forward and helping us to move the needle forward. We have to, from a recruitment standpoint, retention perspective, we need to really focus on that area.

Mr. LAWSON. Okay, thank you.

Madam Chair, I yield back. I know I got extra time, about 5 more minutes, but I am going to yield back to you.

The CHAIR. You may have got away there because of your own educational background. I gave you a little leeway there, but now I am going to bring the co-chair of the HBCU Caucus to bring us home for her questions, Congresswoman Alma Adams.

Ms. ADAMS. Thank you, Madam Chair. You have run a marvelous Committee hearing today. I want to thank everyone for their participation. I especially want to thank our speakers and those who champion our young people at our universities.

I am an HBCU graduate twice. I am proud. I did do the shout-out to my brother in Florida. I gave you a little snake thing that you all do down there.

But anyway, let me say to all of our participants today, thank you each for serving on the executive committee, and Dr. Abdullah, for your chairmanship there.

I want to just follow up on some things and put some things really on the record. Yes, we have seven 1890s that didn't receive a full match, but I have to just be real honest. Having served for 20 years in the North Carolina House, I worked year after year to secure a

one-to-one match for the Federal funding, particularly for North Carolina A&T, but at the same time, our state's 1862 institutions were easily able to secure their matching funds. So, I don't want us to hide behind COVID, because there was inequity prior to COVID, but yet, there were opportunities for state legislatures, even my own, to find the matches for our 1862 schools. So, we have to fix that. It is about priorities and our schools, our 1890s, their HBCUs, they deserve the same equitable funding. So, I just want to put that out there because it has bothered me for a mighty long time. So, I do think we need to fix that, and I want to thank Congresswoman Pingree for raising that. But we are talking about a loss of \$51 million in funding that these seven institutions have lost over the years. So, I believe Congress can do some more to fix it.

But let me just move on to—since Brother Al mentioned something about our facilities, I want to tell you that one of my biggest priorities for the incoming Congress is an HBCU infrastructure. I just believe that whatever infrastructure we do, we have to carve something out there that supports our 1890s as far as the 1890 Facilities Grant Program.

So, what my question is, in terms of the best support for infrastructure needs on your campuses, particularly in the agriculture department, how can Congress or this Committee assist in that? And everybody who would like to give us a response, we would welcome that. And I do have one more question, so if we can be brief on it, I would appreciate it. Thank you so much. So, who wants to go first?

Dr. JONES. Congresswoman Adams, first of all, thank you for your steadfast support and your great advocacy. It hasn't gone unnoticed, and we appreciate what you continue to do for our communities.

This idea around the infrastructure becomes so critical for each of our institutions. Another quick thing that I would just mention is that it is great to receive these resources and grants, but one of the challenges we face is that oftentimes we get an allocation, and it is allocated over a 5 year period. So, for example, my Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, you are waiting almost 5 years before you receive the funding. And in our state, we don't have the ability to move that project forward until all funds are secured. And so, our community is on hold for 5 years until we are able to do that. If there was a way for those funds to be allocated up front, I think we would be able to do much more. But that has been one of the greatest challenges our institution has faced.

Ms. ADAMS. Okay. So, if we can move on to the other two individuals, we have like 30 seconds. If you could give us your quick response, I would appreciate it.

Dr. NAVE. Thank you, Congresswoman Adams.

We are very appreciative of the facilities funds we currently receive, but they allow us to do energy projects. The infrastructure, to me, and with speaking with my dean of ag, is more on a larger scale for us to be able to transition and move into some of these emerging technology areas and to be able to have the truly state-of-the-art facilities that allow us to train the 21st century workers.

Ms. ADAMS. Okay.

Dr. ABDULLAH. Congresswoman Adams, thank you again for all of your support for HBCUs, and I would just like to ask that we increase the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriation of 1890 facilities grants from \$20.5 million to \$30 million. That would be very, very good.

Ms. ADAMS. Great. Thank you.

Madam Chair, I am out of time. You know I can talk some more, but I will yield back right now. Again, thanks everybody for your participation. I appreciate it.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much.

Dusty, Congressman Johnson, do you have any closing remarks that you would like to give?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I think we all know too well that there are chapters in our nation's history particularly related to race that are not a source of pride, but when I look at the chapters in our nation's history that are worthy of pride, frankly, the creation of the 1890s institutions is among them. And our panelists today are adding additional pages to those chapters, because we know that our nation has a need for leadership in agriculture, and it is a need that is going to be even bigger in the days to come than it has been in the past, and our panelists and their wonderful colleges and universities are fulfilling an obligation our country has to provide educational opportunities to students in historically disadvantaged areas and populations, and marrying those together, the need for ag leadership and the obligation to provide this great educational training is something that our panelists are making happen every single day, and I just want to thank them for being authors of the pages of those chapters of pride.

The CHAIR. Thank you. Thank you so much, and the work in South Dakota and other locations with the colleges, the 1994 colleges, and Native Americans is so vitally important. We know that the 1890 colleges will offer whatever support, lessons learned, best practices, so that they can continue to be successful and continue to educate those marginalized communities as well. We are all in this together.

I am so grateful that we were able to have this hearing, and I want to thank the staff for putting this together. I want to particularly thank Alma Adams and her staff for the guidance and support that they provided to us as well, and to our testifiers. We can all agree that our students are a primary concern as we work through this pandemic, and even before the pandemic. The next generation of farmers deserves substantive funding to support important research initiatives. Under my Subcommittee's jurisdiction, I look forward to supporting existing farm bill provisions that will assist in the success of ag programs and ag students.

Support for the 1890 institutions is strong on this Committee. That is evident in the 2018 Farm Bill, with that legislation providing critical support for scholarships, Centers of Excellence, and addressing issues to ensure equity between the 1890s and the 1862s. While I am proud of the achievements we have secured in the 2018 Farm Bill, there is more to be done to support our students, our researchers, our extension professionals. The pandemic and the challenges associated with it have underscored the existing

issues that were already there. The fact is that more work needs to be done to support your institutions.

To the witnesses, thank you so much for your testimony. As you can see on this Committee, you have support from many, many sectors in this country. Also, we have overlap with individuals who are appropriators. I know that you all not only work with Congresswoman Pingree, but also Sanford Bishop, who chairs the Agriculture Subcommittee on the Appropriations Committee, and is always available to our HBCUs and our 1890s.

As we look ahead to the next Congress and to the next farm bill, I look forward to continuing to work with you all and my colleagues on the House Agriculture Committee to further support the 1890s system and the communities that you serve.

Under the Rules of the Committee, the record of today's hearing will remain open for 10 calendar days to receive additional material, any supplemental written responses from the witnesses to any questions posed by a Member, any additional information you would like to be on the record.

This hearing of the Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research is adjourned. Thank you all so much, and have a wonderful holiday season. Please stay safe.

[Whereupon, at 11:54 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

