

Bipartisan Legislation Allows Eligible Minority-Serving Institutions To Provide Greater Opportunities To More Minority Students



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WASHINGTON, D.C.- Senators Mazie K. Hirono and John Cornyn (R-TX), and Representatives Judy Chu (D-CA) and Ed Royce (R-CA) introduced the Minority-Serving Institution Fairness Act in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives today, legislation that would make Minority-Serving Institutions (MSI) eligible to compete for, and receive, multiple federal grants for the purpose of serving a wider range of minority students.

“Hawaii’s colleges and universities serve diverse populations of students, and they shouldn’t be limited to supporting just one student population with MSI funding,” **said Senator Hirono.**

“Targeted outreach to minority students is proven to work. The University of Hawaii system and other Minority-Serving Institutions are currently forced to make the difficult decision of choosing which student population to serve. Our bipartisan legislation will allow these colleges and universities to improve student success by better serving the needs of multiple, diverse student populations.”

“Texas colleges and universities that serve a diverse population of students should not face bureaucratic hurdles to providing a top-notch education to our next generation,” **said Senator Cornyn.** “I’m pleased to work with Senator Hirono in this effort to allow schools to compete for multiple Minority-Serving Institution grants to improve educational outcomes across the board.”

“I am proud to join my House colleague, fellow Californian, and friend, Congressman Ed Royce, as well as Senators Hirono and Cornyn, to introduce the Minority-Serving Institutions Fairness Act,” **said Representative Chu.** “This is a shining example of Congress working together across the aisle to serve minority students in higher education. In particular, this bill allows more institutions to compete for Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) funding, without the restrictions in current law that force them to choose between funding for one minority student population over the other. For Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) and Latino students nationwide, this means that more institutions will be able to compete for and receive Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) and Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) grants at the same time. AAPIs are now the fastest growing racial group in the country, and as colleges and universities become more diverse, we must equip them to compete for critical funding to support their students. As Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), I look forward to working with my colleagues to make the Minority-Serving Institutions Fairness Act a reality as the Higher Education Act moves forward in Congress.”

“California’s colleges and universities should have the flexibility to support a diverse student body, instead of being restricted to pursuing a limited range of federal grants,” **said Representative Royce.** “This common sense legislation rights that wrong in a fiscally

responsible and fair manner. The future success of our country will be aided by Americans of all backgrounds excelling academically, which is why this bipartisan legislation is so critical.”

Currently, there are seven grants available to MSIs, each targeted towards a specific ethnic minority student population. However, under current law, while an MSI may have a diverse student body made up of different ethnicities, most are limited to receiving grants that serve one population at a time. For example, institutions with both a high Hispanic and Asian population currently have to choose which population to serve with MSI funding. The Minority-Serving Institution Fairness Act would allow MSIs to compete for funding for both types of grants for which they qualify, improving educational opportunities for a wider range of students on their campuses.

The Minority-Serving Institution Fairness Act is supported by Mt. San Antonio College, the California State University System, the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans, the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, the Asian American and Pacific Islander Association of Colleges and Universities, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, the University of Guam, Brookhaven College, the University of Texas, California State University East Bay, the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement, the University of Hawaii System, Dallas County Community College District, the University of Houston, Pasadena City College, and the Asian and Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund.

“The University of Hawaii System has 10 of the most diverse campuses in the nation,” **said David Lassner, President of the University of Hawaii System.** “Our institutions are striving to serve high concentrations of Native Hawaiians, Asian Americans, and Native American Pacific Islanders, many of whom are from low-income families, are the first-generation in their families to attend college, or face other barriers to completing a college degree. Today federal law only allows our campuses to win one type of targeted Minority-Serving Institution grant at once. Senator Hirono’s Minority-Serving Institution Fairness Act would allow UH campuses to win multiple types of grants to better provide targeted support to our diverse student populations on campus.”

“Numerous California State University (CSU) campuses provide high quality educational opportunities to large numbers of low-income students from California’s extremely diverse Hispanic and Asian American and Pacific Islander communities,” **said California State University Chancellor Timothy P. White.** “This bill aims to broaden opportunities for multi-diverse institutions to compete for funding that would enhance the success of all of these students by utilizing innovative, tailored strategies. The CSU appreciates the leadership of Senators Hirono and Cornyn, and Representatives Chu and Royce in this effort and looks forward to working with the Congress on this issue as reauthorization of the Higher Education Act progresses.”

"SEARAC commends Senator Hirono's proposal that enhances the ability of Minority Serving Institutions to fulfill their mission in providing exemplary education for all students from traditionally underserved backgrounds, many of whom are the first in their families and communities to pursue a college degree, changing their life outcomes and their community's outcomes," **said Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) Executive Director Quyen Dinh.** “This proposal allows institutions to provide community-tailored solutions to meet the needs of their entire diverse student body - especially those from challenging socioeconomic backgrounds who deserve additional targeted resources to help them fulfill their potential."

“APIASF supports the MSI Fairness Act and applauds Senator Hirono’s and Senator Cornyn’s efforts to encourage institutions to qualify for multiple designations, which ultimately allows them to serve more students in a targeted and relevant manner,” **said Neil Horikoshi, executive director of the Asian Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF).** “As our nation’s landscape changes, thoughtful funding for education equity is fundamental for the success of our nation’s next generation of leaders.”