



The Honorable Yvette Clarke
U.S. House of Representatives
2058 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Troy Carter
U.S. House of Representatives
442 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lucy McBath
U.S. House of Representatives
2246 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Marilyn Strickland
U.S. House of Representatives
1708 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sydney Kamlager-Dove
U.S. House of Representatives
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

February 17, 2025

Dear Chairwoman Clarke & Members of the Congressional Black Caucus:

The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA), Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC), Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC), and Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC), represent Historically Black Colleges & Universities within Divisions' I and II of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). As members of the NCAA, our four Conferences include 48 institutions spanning nearly twenty states. We serve 15,000 student athletes, and bring together millions of HBCU alumni, fans and communities in celebration of our rich history and traditions.

While there have been historic changes recently in collegiate sports to support student-athletes overall, opportunities for our predominantly Black students at our institutions are at risk. Pending regulatory decisions and litigation threaten to change the face of college sports devoid of our input and, more importantly, without the voices of our student athletes, administrators and us as commissioners leading our conferences being considered. *To ensure that college sports broadly – and HBCU sports especially – can continue to thrive, it's essential that Congress allow for consistent and nimble national governance and affirm that student-athletes are not designated as employees of their universities.*

There continues to be a growing patchwork of state laws impacting college sports and creating disparities and confusion among our prospective and current student-athletes. The disparate laws and increasing court decisions have made it difficult for conferences like ours to continue to provide developmental and competition opportunities for member institutions and student-athletes. Retention is also a challenge within our HBCU student athlete population due to increasing differences in state laws and legal activity that have all but eliminated a level playing field.

At the same time, we are witnessing ongoing efforts to classify student-athletes as employees. Like the majority of our mid-major and Division II peers, most HBCUs do not generate significant revenue and rely heavily on school appropriated funds and donations. Classifying student-athletes as employees would have a devastating impact on our athletic programs and schools, and in some cases lead to the elimination of intercollegiate athletics.

Amid these looming outside threats, there has also been significant internal transformation during President Charlie Baker's first two years leading the NCAA. Recent initiatives and enhancements including membership funded sports injury health coverage for all college athletes for up to two years after graduation, student-athletes' access to mental health services, financial literacy training, health and well-being benefits, scholarship protections, and degree completion funding are bettering the student athlete experience. While we are working tirelessly to advocate for and protect all that we have accomplished with our HBCU campuses, we need your support and understanding in the value of affirming that student-athletes are not employees of their universities and in pre-empting state law and providing limited safe harbor protections to create clear and fair playing fields for HBCU student-athletes.

Over the past few years we have made efforts to meet with members of Congress and the Congressional Black Caucus to share the HBCU sports community's views regarding the passage of federal legislation for intercollegiate athletics. We continue to stand ready to engage as resources and as part of the dialogue on the important issues impacting HBCU intercollegiate athletics. We would like to invite Chair Clarke and/or members of her leadership team to discuss the important role the Congressional Black Caucus can play in protecting future opportunities for HBCU schools and student-athletes. Please let us know if there is a time in February or March that would be convenient to meet in-person or virtually.

Thank you again for your consideration and for your continued support of HBCU communities.

Kind regards,

Commissioner Jacquie McWilliams
Central Intercollegiate Athletic Conference



Commissioner Sonja Stills
Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference



Commissioner Anthony Holloman
Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference



Commissioner Charles McClelland
Southwestern Athletic Conference



Cc:

The Honorable Alma Adams
The Honorable Angela Alsobrooks
The Honorable Gabriel Amo
The Honorable Joyce Beatty
The Honorable Wesley Bell
The Honorable Sanford Bishop
The Honorable Lisa Blunt Rochester
The Honorable Cory Booker
The Honorable Shontel Brown
The Honorable Janelle Bynum
The Honorable Andre Carson
The Honorable Troy Carter
The Honorable Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
The Honorable Yvette Clarke
The Honorable Emanuel Cleaver
The Honorable James Clyburn
The Honorable Herbert Conaway
The Honorable Jasmine Crockett
The Honorable Danny Davis
The Honorable Donald Davis
The Honorable Dwight Evans
The Honorable Cleo Fields
The Honorable Shomari Figures
The Honorable Valerie Foushee
The Honorable Maxwell Frost
The Honorable Al Green
The Honorable Jahana Hayes
The Honorable Glenn Ivey
The Honorable Jonathan Jackson
The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
The Honorable Henry Johnson

The Honorable Sydney Kamlager-Dove
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The Honorable Summer Lee
The Honorable Lucia McBath
The Honorable Jennifer McClellan
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The Honorable Gregory Meeks
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The Honorable Stacey Plaskett
The Honorable Ayanna Pressley
The Honorable Robert Scott
The Honorable David Scott
The Honorable Terry Sewell
The Honorable Lateefah Simon
The Honorable Marilyn Strickland
The Honorable Emilia Sykes
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The Honorable Raphael Warnock
The Honorable Maxine Waters
The Honorable Bonnie Watson Coleman
The Honorable Nikema Williams
The Honorable Frederica Wilson