



DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of the President

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**Remarks of
President Tony Allen
Delaware State University**

Introductory Remarks

Good morning! I'm Tony Allen, President of Delaware State University, and I'd like to thank Chairman Scott, Vice-Chair Adams, Ranking Member Thompson and all of the members of the House Agriculture Committee, and the committee staff for inviting us here today.

There is literally no doubt that the US Department of Agriculture (especially the National Institute of Food and Agriculture —NIFA) and the 1890 Land Grant program are the strong foundation upon which our institutions thrive. It's because of our long-running partnership that we continue to have an impact on our students, our communities, and our nation. At Delaware State University, where we aspire to becoming one of the nation's first HBCUs to reach R1 research status, we know that we can't do it without you.

I'd further acknowledge the tremendous support — both past and proposed — from other federal programs and legislation upon which so many of you on both sides of the aisle have worked: the annual Farm Bill, the FLIGHT Act, the CARES act, the American Recovery Plan, and Representative Adams' proposed IGNITE Act.

Thanks to your continued support, Delaware State University and the other 1890 Land Grant institutions have successfully weathered the storm of COVID-19. In our case, we were able to collaborate with Testing for America last summer to perform over 75,000 COVID tests, allowing

us to bring our student body back to campus safely during the last school year, with a virus positive rate consistently less than 0.5%. Among these students were our first 43 recipients of the 1890 Scholarships that you authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill. We were also able to avoid pausing our aggressive research agenda by applying more thorough safety protocols. As a result, instead of retrenching, our overall research portfolio actually grew by 17% in FY 21, including the construction of the first in-State COVID testing laboratory in Delaware. I should note our gratitude for receiving a USDA AFRI Covid-19 Rapid Response grant here.

My extended remarks will cover more thoroughly the ways in which we and the other 1890 Land Grant institutions apply and leverage the resources you have provided, but I want to emphasize our continuing work of economically sustainable agriculture in a changing climate. In Delaware, we live this reality every day, from the impacts of Atlantic storms to the increasing soil acidification. We are deeply involved not only in research on crop and livestock diversification but also in pioneering new business models, and workforce development.

Thanks in no small measure to your support, a biomass research team led by Delaware State University researchers has submitted a patent for developing the novel designer lignin peroxidase, an enzyme which releases ~200% more fermentable sugars during pre-treatment of bioenergy feedstock. Other 1890 institutions are doing similarly groundbreaking work at preparing our nation's farmers and food producers to keep meeting America's food requirements in changing times.

I remain constantly aware, as do my 1890 colleagues, that strong bipartisan leadership in agriculture — and especially in this committee — is critical to our continued success in educating new professionals, training our workforce, conducting the research necessary for long-term sustainability, and maintaining the primacy of American agriculture in the marketplace of an increasingly smaller, interconnected world. We could not do it without you, and we remain forever

grateful for your support.