

# TMCF, UNCF Release Joint Statement on Recent Terrorist Threats to HBCUs and on FBI Briefing

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Over the past month, more than two dozen historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have received terroristic threats in an apparent attempt to disrupt and, presumably, sow fear in our campus communities. These attempts to intimidate the HBCU community reached a peak on Tuesday, Feb. 1 — the first day of Black History Month — when 13 HBCUs were forced to disrupt their normal operations due to coordinated threats posed to their respective campuses.

The United Negro College Fund (UNCF) and The Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) are pleased that the federal government has characterized its ongoing investigation into these threats as “threats of terror with the utmost seriousness” and as acts of domestic terrorism, as announced during a recent briefing by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Given the federal government’s characterization of these threats, we anticipate and expect that the Justice Department will fully prosecute the individuals responsible for these heinous acts and we look forward to the swift conclusion of this matter.

Unfortunately, these terrorist acts fall squarely into a recent trendline documented by the Center for Strategic and International Studies that reflects a sharp increase in right-wing extremist attacks and plots in the United States in recent years. HBCUs, as institutions founded for the original purpose of educating and uplifting former enslaved people and their descendants, have been at the forefront of social and economic justice advocacy for more than 180 years. Our universities’ missions and their historic legacies naturally put them at odds with the enemies of equality which, even in the 21st century, makes our institutions and their students, staff, faculty and administrators an apparent target for extremism. Notwithstanding these attempts to terrorize our community, our HBCUs remain unbroken and unbowed.

The actions of a misguided few will not deter our institutions from fulfilling their collective mission to educate our nation’s next generation of teachers, entrepreneurs and leaders. We are hopeful that congressional, state, community and philanthropic leaders will join with us and offer the support that is needed for us to offer our students the sense of security needed as we move forward with the same sense of resilience we have shown since the founding of the first HBCU in 1837.

Reflecting on these incidents, we are reminded of the words of the late Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, which still are instructive today:

“I wish I could say that racism and prejudice were only distant memories. We must dissent from the indifference. We must dissent from the apathy. We must dissent from the fear, the hatred and the mistrust... We must dissent because America can do better, because America has no choice but to do better.”

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