

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 26, 2025

The Honorable Linda E. McMahon
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon,

We are writing to express our deep concern regarding the Department of Education's ("the Department's") recent decision to discontinue discretionary grant programs for Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), including the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (Title V Part A) program and related initiatives. These programs have long provided critical resources to colleges and universities that serve historically underserved students, and their loss would have far-reaching consequences for institutions, communities, and students across the country. The abrupt nature of this decision has created significant uncertainty and threatens to undermine decades of progress supported by bipartisan action in Congress.

The impact in Arizona would be particularly pronounced. There are 284 current HSI grantees nationwide that are affected by this decision, including 11 of the 24 HSIs in Arizona.¹ Our state's HSIs collectively enroll nearly 90,000 Hispanic students, contributing to the more than 600 Hispanic Serving Institutions nationwide.² Each of these Arizona universities has earned HSI status, demonstrating their commitment to expanding access and opportunity for Hispanic students and their families. Federal investments tied to these programs have supported student services, academic development, and campus infrastructure that help make college more accessible and achievable.

The need for such investment remains clear. Only 21 percent of Latino high school graduates in Arizona enroll in a four-year college within a year of graduation, compared to 38 percent of white students.³ This gap represents thousands of students each year who are missing the opportunity to pursue higher education and the economic mobility that comes with it. Continued support for HSIs is critical to addressing these disparities, ensuring that institutions have the resources to recruit, retain, and graduate students from historically underserved communities.

¹ Central Arizona College, Northern Arizona University, Phoenix College, South Mountain Community College, Mesa Community College, Rio Salado College, Chandler-Gilbert Community College, Pima Community College, University of Arizona, Arizona Christian University, and Mohave Community College.

² Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, "Hispanic-serving institutions across the nation total 615," April 25, 2025, <https://hacu.net/hispanic-serving-institutions-across-the-nation-total-615/>

³ AZ Central, "Lawsuit targets Hispanic-Serving Colleges." June 27, 2025, <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona-education/2025/06/26/lawsuit-targets-hispanic-serving-colleges/78784758007>

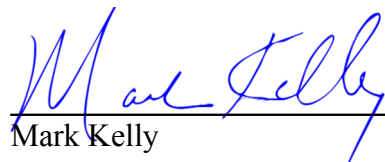
The Department has indicated that approximately 350 million dollars in discretionary funds will be reprogrammed into other initiatives.⁴ However, these funds were expressly authorized by Congress to strengthen MSIs, and disregarding their intended use creates serious uncertainty for the institutions that depend on them. We respectfully urge the Department to continue funding discretionary MSI and HSI programs in Fiscal Year 2025, or at a minimum, provide continuation support while working with Congress on an alternative framework that both meets constitutional requirements and maintains support for the institutions that need it most.

We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and your commitment to equal access to higher education. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that Hispanic Serving Institutions in Arizona continue to fulfill their mission as engines of opportunity and economic mobility.

Sincerely,



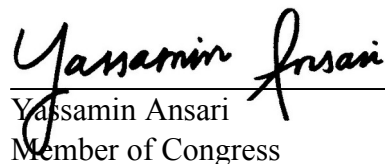
Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress

⁴ U.S. Department of Education, “U.S. Department of Education Ends Funding to Racially Discriminatory Discretionary Grant Programs at Minority-Serving Institutions,” September 10, 2025, <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-ends-funding-racially-discriminatory-discretionary-grant-programs-minority-serving-institutions>