

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 24, 2022

**VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION**

The Honorable Merrick B. Garland  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

The Honorable Christopher A. Wray  
Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20535-0001

Dear Attorney General Garland and Director Wray:

Thank you for your service. We write to request continued updates and prioritization of the ongoing bomb threats made against Historically Black Colleges and Universities ("HBCUs") from the U.S. Department of Justice ("DOJ") and the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI").

Beginning on January 5, at least eight HBCUs, including Howard University, Spelman College, the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, and Prairie View A&M University, reported receiving bomb threats.<sup>1</sup> Weeks later, on January 31, at least six additional HBCUs, including Bowie State University and Southern A&M University, reported receiving threats.<sup>2</sup> Again, on February 1, the first day of Black History Month, at least fourteen HBCUs reported receiving bomb threats.<sup>3</sup> Since the waves of bomb threats began, several HBCUs, such as Howard University and Spelman College, have been subjected to multiple threats.<sup>4</sup> To date, more than one-third of the 101 institutions recognized as HBCUs have received bomb threats.<sup>5</sup>

Historically, African Americans have been subjected to and been the victims of domestic terrorism in settings that are traditionally regarded as safe spaces, such as academic institutions and places of worship. Given the unique history of inequality, structural racism, and violent extremism toward African Americans in our country, the ongoing bomb threats must be taken seriously.

On March 1, the FBI held an unclassified briefing for Members of Congress and their staff to provide an update on its investigation into the nationwide bomb threats targeting HBCUs and faith-

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Jeong & Susan Svrluga, *Howard University and at Least 7 Other HBCUs Receive Bomb Threats, Triggering Evacuations and Lockdowns*, Wash. Post, Jan. 5, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/01/05/hbcu-bomb-threats-howard-university/>.

<sup>2</sup> Joe Hernandez & Bill Chappell, *New Bomb Threats Disrupt Campus Activities at Several HBCUs*, NPR, Feb. 1, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/2022/01/31/1077000576/hbcu-howard-bomb-threat-lockdown>.

<sup>3</sup> Travis Caldwell & Alisha Ebrahimji, *The FBI Has Identified Suspects Accused of Making Threats to HBCUs This Week, Official Says*, CNN, Feb. 3, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/03/us/hbcu-bomb-threats-fbi-investigation/index.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Kaanita Iyler, *Another Bomb Threat Was Reported at a HBCU This Week. Here's Where the Investigation Stands*, Feb. 9, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/09/us/spelman-hbcu-bomb-threats/index.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Francesca Chambers, *Dozens of Bomb Threats Have HBCUs Looking to Biden for Support, FBI for Answers*, Mar. 9, 2022, <https://www.thenewtribune.com/news/nation-world/national/article259152728.html>.

based houses of worship. While we appreciate the updates that federal law enforcement and other interested agencies provided, numerous questions remain that have yet to be answered.

In early February, the FBI reportedly identified six juvenile suspects in conjunction with the bomb threats. Since that time, the FBI has made no known arrests. The lack of arrests is alarming and unsettling because the bomb threats remain ongoing.

As Members of Congress, we cannot take these ongoing threats lightly. It pained us to have to recount history's dark past during Black History Month—which is traditionally regarded as a time of celebration. However, we could not ignore the disturbances, fear, and trauma these ongoing threats have caused faculty, students, parents, and alumni of HBCUs.

We understand that you must protect the integrity of your investigation. However, we respectfully request that you continue to regularly update Members of Congress on any developments in this matter either in writing or in an unclassified or classified briefing.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this critical matter. We appreciate your work and are willing and able to provide any support or assistance you may need. Please confirm receipt of this letter.

Sincerely,



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Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



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Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress



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Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress



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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress



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Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



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John Yarmuth  
Member of Congress



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Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress



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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



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Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress



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Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress



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Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress



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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



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Mary Gay Scanlon  
Member of Congress



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Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress



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Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



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Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Alejandro N. Mayorkas, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
The Honorable Miguel A. Cardona, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education  
The Honorable Marvin G. Richardson, Acting Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives