

Greetings Congresswoman Foushee.

On behalf of the Payne Center, we are writing to formally endorse the **HBCU AI Research Leadership Act**. We appreciate you sharing the draft text with us this morning and providing the opportunity to support this critical piece of legislation.

As an organization tasked with supporting the artificial intelligence needs of Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) member institutions, we understand the vast potential—and the current resource gaps—that exist within our HBCU community. While HBCUs produce a disproportionate number of Black graduates in STEM fields, they have historically been underfunded when it comes to research infrastructure.

Your bill directly addresses this disparity. By amending the National Artificial Intelligence Initiative Act to designate **no less than ten percent** of National AI Research Institute awards specifically for HBCUs, you are ensuring that the institutions that educate a significant portion of America's diverse talent are not left on the sidelines of the AI revolution. This "special allocation" is not a handout; it is a strategic investment in the innovation capacity of the United States.

Quote from the Payne Center:

"The HBCU AI Research Leadership Act is a pivotal step toward democratizing AI research and development. By mandating dedicated resources for HBCUs to lead or co-lead National AI Research Institutes, Congresswoman Foushee is ensuring that the future of artificial intelligence is built by the brightest minds from every community. This Act leverages the research findings in the recent Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) report, "The American Dividend: Public HBCUs Powering National Strength and Opportunity". The Payne Center stands ready to support TMCf member institutions in leveraging this opportunity to lead the world in AI research."

We are grateful for your leadership on both the *Expanding AI Voices Act* and this new legislation. We look forward to working with your office and our colleagues in Congress to see this bill enacted.

Sincerely,



M. C. Brown II, Ph.D.

Executive Director, The Payne Center