

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 31, 2017

Chancellor Frank T. Brogan
Office of the Chancellor
Dixon University Center
2986 North Second Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Dear Chancellor Brogan,

We write this letter in support of Cheyney University, the oldest Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in the nation. Since their inception prior to the American Civil War, HBCUs have continued to serve the educational needs of Black Americans throughout the United States. However, prior to their establishment, Blacks were often denied admission into traditional higher education institutions. With the establishment of these esteemed schools, black Americans received the unprecedented opportunity to pursue postsecondary education and work towards the American Dream.

While HBCUs are often revered for their historic contributions, one must not ignore their continued relevance and importance to 21st century America. Although HBCUs only make up 3% of today's colleges and universities, more than 20% of African-American college graduates attend an HBCU. Additionally, a report issued by the United States Commission on Civil Rights reports that in our nation, HBCU graduates make up 40% of the African-American Members of Congress, 40% of engineers, 50% of lawyers, and 80% of its judges. For years, these historic institutions have produced amazing leaders that not only contribute to their respective fields, but who also pride themselves on their "lifting-while-they-climb" attitudes.

With these institutions having such a vast importance in our nation, it is imperative that we protect both the institution and their significant societal contributions by continuously ensuring their success.

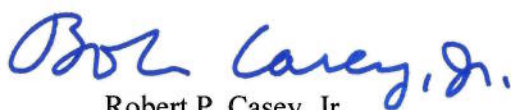
One school that we should have a hand in assisting is Cheyney University—the oldest HBCU in the nation, located in our home state of Pennsylvania. Cheyney first opened its doors on February 25, 1837, almost a quarter century before Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. Since it's opening, the school has produced several notable alumni such as Julian Abele, the architect of the Philadelphia Free Library, and Rebecca J. Cole, one of the nation's first black female physicians.

A recent notable accomplishment Cheyney holds is that forty-one Cheyney University student-athletes earned Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) Scholar Athlete honors for carrying a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher throughout the 2016-2017 season. Twenty-six percent of Cheyney Wolves earned the right to be called PSAC scholar-athletes, representing Cheyney's highest percentage of PSAC scholar-athletes since the PSAC started charting academic progress in 1995.

Thus, as Cheyney holds such a unique place among higher education in our nation and is currently undertaking programs and initiatives to provide a quality higher education to its current students, it is important to preserve its legacy and to work to uphold the school's accreditation.

Due to the educational opportunities Cheyney provides, and its significance not only to Pennsylvania but its historic significance to our nation, we want to make sure all avenues of assistance have been pursued in order to ensure a strengthened institution. While Cheyney's path has been a rocky one, we believe they are committed to ensuring a strong path forward. We remain optimistic Cheyney will show they have taken the steps needed to ensure the viability of the institution and will ensure we pursue all federal options, as is our duty to the people who live in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We request that you do all you can to help them regain their strength and viability.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
U.S. Senate



Dwight Evans
U.S. House of Representatives

Cc: Governor Tom Wolf
Pennsylvania Secretary of Education Pedro A. Rivera
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Mr. David M. Maser, PASSHE Vice-Chair
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Mr. Thomas S. Muller
Mr. Guido M. Pichini
Senator Judith L. Schwank
Mr. Brian Swatt
Mr. Robert Bogle, Chairman of the Cheyney University Council of Trustees
Middle States Commission on Higher Education