

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 23, 2008

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
United States Senate
Committee on Health, Education, Labor,
and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael B. Enzi
United States Senate
Committee on Health, Education, Labor,
and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable George Miller
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Education and Labor
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Howard P. McKeon
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Education and Labor
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Kennedy and Miller and Ranking Members Enzi and McKeon:

We are writing to express our support for the Urban-Serving Research Universities Program that is included as Section 707 of H.R. 4137, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act, and ask that it be maintained in the final version of the Higher Education Act Reauthorization bill.

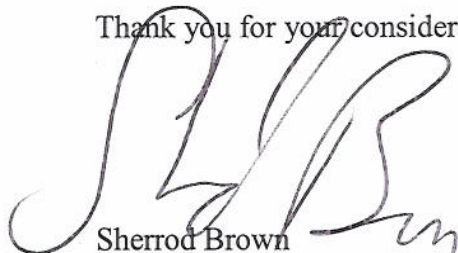
Urban areas face many unique challenges. Urban schools have higher dropout rates than the national average and many neighborhoods face high poverty rates and have a difficult time attracting businesses. Urban universities are uniquely positioned with a broad range of skills and resources – intellectual, human, technological, and social – to successfully address these issues.

The Urban-Serving Research Universities Program authorizes competitive grants for urban research universities to develop initiatives geared toward improving the communities in which they are located. Grants awarded through this program will enable universities to work with elementary and secondary schools to improve teacher quality and retention and develop strategies to improve postsecondary and workplace readiness, particularly in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.


Funding will also enable universities to partner with community-based organizations and other public or nonprofit private entities to develop and implement: 1) innovative economic revitalization efforts, and 2) public health outreach, education, and intervention activities designed to reduce health disparities in urban areas.

We believe that supporting urban institutions of higher education will help to address these challenges and we urge you to include the Urban-Serving Research Universities program in the final Higher Education Act reauthorization bill.

Thank you for your consideration.




Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Pat Roberts
United States Senator




Claire McCaskill
United States Senator



George Voinovich
United States Senator



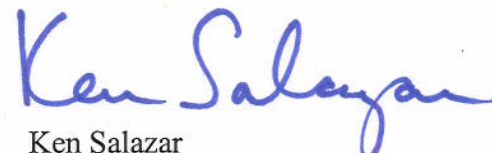
Ron Wyden
United States Senator




Sam Brownback
United States Senator




Gordon Smith
United States Senator



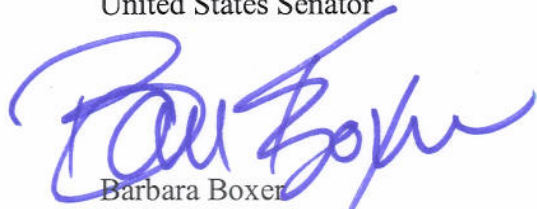
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United States Senator




Bill Nelson
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Robert Casey
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Christopher Bond
United States Senator



Benjamin Cardin
United States Senator