



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 8, 2008

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**STATEMENT OF DR. MICHAEL L. LOMAX
PRESIDENT AND CEO OF UNCF—THE UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND
ON HOUSE PASSAGE OF HR 4137
THE COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY AND AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2008**

(Fairfax, Va.)--UNCF commends Chairman George Miller (D-CA) for leading a bipartisan effort, in collaboration with ranking member Rep. Buck McKeon (R-CA) and members of the Congressional Black Caucus who assisted in securing today's passage of H.R. 4137, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2008. UNCF has waited nearly ten years for Congress to reauthorize the Higher Education Act. (HEA). On behalf of the 39 historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) that make up UNCF and their 55,000 students, I want to express our gratitude to Chairman Miller for his leadership in the long and difficult reauthorization process.

Three of the bill's provisions will make especially important contributions to the work of HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions (MSIs):

- The inclusion in the HEA Reauthorization of the provisions of the MSI Digital Divide bill will make an important contribution to giving minority colleges and universities and their students access to levels of technology that many other institutions take for granted. Rep. Edolphus Towns (D-NY) of New York, an HBCU graduate, deserves a great deal of credit for assuring that technology equity will finally become federal policy.
- Working with Majority Whip Jim Clyburn (D-SC), also an HBCU graduate, and others on the Education Committee, UNCF led the successful effort to include provisions that make credit more accessible and affordable so that HBCUs can support campus construction and renovation projects. Additionally, Rep. Clyburn spearheaded language increasing the program's lending authority to \$1.1 billion.
- The increase from \$300 million to \$500 million in the authorization levels for HBCUs, and the increase from \$100 million to \$125 million for historically black graduate institutions. We are grateful to Rep. Jim Cooper (D-TN), who represents UNCF member college Fisk University, for his commitment and leadership in supporting capacity building by HBCUs.

The House's action today brings us a big step closer to giving HBCUs the support they need to educate their students to become full participants in their communities and in the global economy. We look forward to the Conference of the bill and final Congressional passage.

About UNCF

UNCF—the United Negro College Fund—is the nation's oldest and most successful minority education assistance organization. Its mission is to increase minority degree attainment by providing financial support to its 39 member institutions, reducing financial barriers to college and serving as a national advocate for minority education. UNCF institutions and other historically black colleges and universities are highly effective, awarding 18 percent of African American baccalaureate degrees. UNCF administers more than 400 programs, including scholarship, internship and fellowship, mentoring, summer enrichment, and curriculum and faculty development programs. Today, UNCF supports more than 60,000 students at over 900 colleges and universities across the country. UNCF's recently redesigned logo and brand identity feature UNCF's torch of leadership in education and its widely recognized motto, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste."® Learn more at www.UNCF.org.