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December 16th, 2011

The Honorable Rick Scott
Governor of the state of Florida
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

As a proud alumni of Florida A&M University (FAMU), I am extremely disappointed with your effort to suspend the university's President, Dr. James Ammons. By carrying out this action, you may very well jeopardize the academic accreditation of FAMU, one of our nation's finest Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Although we are all very saddened by this tragic incident, I strongly believe that it needs to be put into perspective. There have been numerous incidents involving hazing in Florida schools prior to this occurrence, such as one that occurred at the University of Miami, one at the University of Central Florida, and another, at Florida State University, which have led to the state laws currently in place regarding hazing.

However, to single out FAMU and make this school a scapegoat is entirely unfair. Dr. Ammons has had an illustrious career, which began with his studies at FAMU. And let us not forget that there was a time when top FAMU school administrators could not even be in the same room to consult with administrators from other Florida colleges and universities.

Indisputably, FAMU is a national treasure, which we are fortunate to have right here in Florida. FAMU is a university with eight fully funded endowed eminent scholars, including two in the School of Journalism and Graphic Communications, four in the School of Business and Industry, one in the College of Education, and one in its School of Pharmacy, which is one of the top Pharmacological programs in the nation, and graduates the largest number of African American pharmacists in the United States.

In fact, in September, 2006, Black Enterprise Magazine, named Florida A&M the number-one college for African Americans in the United States. FAMU is also a member school of the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund, was selected as the TIME Magazine-Princeton Review "College of the Year," and was cited in 1999 by Black Issues in Higher Education for awarding more baccalaureate degrees to African-Americans than any institutions in the nation. Moreover, there are a number of FAMU graduates here in Congress, including myself, the Honorable

Alcee Hastings, Congressman David Scott of Georgia, Congressman Al Green of Texas, the Honorable Congresswoman Carrie Meek and Congressman Kendrick Meek.

Lastly, a suspension of President Ammons threatens the University's compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.2.4, which states that "The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious or other external bodies, and protects the institution from such influence...(and) a violation of this critical standard seriously jeopardizes a University's accreditation.

Again, this is a tragic situation. I am praying for the family of Robert Champion and the rest of the FAMU family. Yet this is part of a much larger problem. Certainly, issues relating to hazing and bullying are not limited to FAMU or to black colleges but to schools nationwide and need to be addressed. Yet focusing excessively on one incident at just one school is not the answer or the proper path towards correcting this problem.

I would very much appreciate a response to this most urgent matter at your earliest possible convenience. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,



Corrine Brown
Member of Congress