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SAVE THE DATE**The Skanner
Foundation****MLK
Breakfast****January 15
2018****NEW LOCATION!**

Opinion

Building a Pipeline of HBCU Students to Washington, D.C.

Summer internships are one important way that students can explore passions they want to pursue as a profession. They are exposed to a form of learning that goes beyond the books and may be the best chance they have to ensure they are making a wise investment. I am a strong believer in the notion that, in order to have your issues heard, you need to have a seat at the table; which is why I applaud HBCU students who are interested in pursuing government and policy and have worked with both Democrats and Republicans in Congress to ensure they have summer internships opportunities on Capitol Hill.

Representative Bryne (R-Ala.) and I founded the Bipartisan HBCU Caucus in April of 2015; we knew there needed to be a platform to promote and protect the needs and interests of HBCUs around the country. After two years, the caucus now consists of nearly sixty members in both the House and the Senate, who recognize the importance of HBCUs and applaud their history of producing successful graduates. The more than 100 HBCUs nationwide only account for three percent of all institutions of higher learning in the U.S. yet



Alma Adams

Congresswoman
(D-N.C.)

they produce 20 percent of African American graduates with a bachelor's degree and 25 percent of African American STEM graduates. This issue is personal to me, because I would not be here today if

“Our vision was to create a program that brought bright and driven HBCU students to Capitol Hill to intern in both a Republican and Democratic office

it were not for an HBCU that was willing to take a chance on me. I am a strong advocate for our schools because I know, firsthand, the impact they have on a student's life.

During the summer of 2016, Representative Mark Walker (R-N.C.) and I partnered together to create the Bipartisan HBCU Internship. Our vision was to create a program that brought bright and driven HBCU students to Capitol Hill to intern in both a Republican and Democratic office. During its first year,

two HBCU students, one from North Carolina A&T University and one from Johnson C. Smith University, traveled to Capitol Hill for the internship program. Each student spent four weeks in my office and four weeks in Representative Walker's office to get a feel for the differences and many commonalities we share. They attended congressional hearings and committee meetings, drafted memos and constituent correspondence, and met with Members of

with writing samples, work experience, incredible memories and personal connections to aid them in their job search after college. But it's not just students that benefited from this experience, Democrats and Republicans alike got to hear directly from HBCU students about their campus life, challenges they face, and their pride in their institutions. Their presence made our fight for HBCUs personal and reminded Members of Congress that our similarities far outweigh our differences.

W.E.B. Dubois said, "Of all the civil rights for which the world has struggled and fought for 500 years, the right to learn is undoubtedly the most fundamental." HBCUs are rooted in the tumultuous history of race in America but their contributions to modern society go far beyond their humble beginnings. HBCUs play an integral role in educating students of color and, with increased advocacy and a seat at the decision-making table, their reach will continue to grow.

Congressman Walker and I are proud to continue this internship for a second summer to increase the diversity of opinions and experiences on Capitol Hill and to build a pipeline of HBCU students to Washington, D.C.

'Using Airbnb to Grow My Business, 'I Bike Harlem'

For decades, many travelers to New York City have limited their excursions to Manhattan neighborhoods south of Central Park. Moreover, those who do choose to go beyond the traditional tourist hotspots often see neighborhoods like Harlem — my home for nine years — from the top floor of a tour bus.

This experience cannot possibly impart the "real" Harlem — a vibrant and historic community with world-class cuisine, soulful music and a rich artistic scene that continues to breathe new life into an area whose cultural exports have been changing the world for over a hundred years.

I want visitors to see the Harlem I know up close, not from behind the plexiglass of a tour bus window. My business, "I Bike Harlem," gives travelers the opportunity to discover our handsome brownstones and vibrant small businesses. It's a business I am incredibly proud of and it's a business that would not exist were it not for the economic opportunity provided by Airbnb.

I began sharing my home on Airbnb as a way to earn a little extra money while starting I Bike Harlem. Through Airbnb, I was able to raise the funds I needed to start my business — investing in the bicycles, helmets, storage,



Maxine Daniels

I Bike Harlem

and insurance that brought it from an idea on paper to reality. Now, my business is growing — with customers from all around the world including right here in Harlem. In fact,

“I am proud to be an 'Experience' host, bringing the Harlem I know and love within reach of millions of Airbnb travelers

many of my customers are Airbnb guests. In that way, I am part of an "Airbnb business cycle": I started my company with income earned as an Airbnb host, and in turn, Airbnb guests have helped my business grow and thrive.

Our elected officials often talk about fostering a "startup" culture in New York City, with millions of dollars invested in tech campuses, incubators, and tax credits throughout the Empire State. Important as these investments are, the truth is that our public policy must recognize that entrepreneurship and the economic activity it generates, comes in many dif-

ferent forms, now more than ever.

For example, I cannot count on an angel investments or incubators to help my business grow. Rather than relying on "startup" culture, my business is grounded in Harlem's culture and the desire of travelers to experience a new place from a local's perspective. And the investors who helped my business get off the ground aren't venture capitalists; they are everyday

In addition, Airbnb helps visitors identify and patronize authentic local businesses by publishing neighborhood guidebooks and partnering with local business associations, such as the Harlem Business Alliance, to hold "Small Business Socials" and "Merchant Walks."

The impact of these initiatives are two-fold: saving businesses money otherwise spent on marketing, while drawing visitors to neighborhood businesses off-the-beat-en-path.

In fact, 76 percent of restaurants in guidebooks appear outside of traditional hotel districts. With these services, it's no wonder that Airbnb guests spent \$470 million at NYC restaurants in the year ending September 1, 2016, and more than \$1.5 billion in restaurants over the same period in America's 19 largest cities.

Airbnb is more than just a short-term rental website, it is a dynamic platform that is proving to be an engine of economic opportunity. It helps neighborhoods that have long been ignored by the traditional tourism industry, brings in new customers to local shops, and gives New Yorkers like me the chance to forge a new livelihood by sharing my home and building my business.