



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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Governor Shapiro Hosts Ceremonial Bill Signing of HB 1461 at Lincoln University, Celebrates Funding Increase for Nation's First Degree-Granting HBCU

HB 1461 funds all four state-related universities, boosting Lincoln University's funding by 21 percent.



Lincoln University, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** joined **Secretary of Education Dr. Khalid Mumin, Rep. Jordan Harris, Sen. Vincent Hughes, Sen. Carolyn Comitta, Lincoln University President Brenda Allen** and **Lincoln University students and staff** for a ceremonial bill signing of House Bill (HB) 1461, which provides state funding for Lincoln University and other state-related universities.

Governor Shapiro [signed](#) HB 1461 into law as [Act 11A](#) on November 16, 2023. Act 11A increases Lincoln University's state funding by 21 percent, to over \$18 million, to help the University continue to train the next generation of leaders, fund scholarships for students, recruit and pay the professors students rely on, and bring on additional support staff for students.

"It's a privilege to be back here at Lincoln University almost seven months after I delivered my first commencement address as Governor – right here on this campus, to the Lincoln University Class of 2023," said **Governor Josh Shapiro**. "Our Commonwealth and our country owe a debt of gratitude to this university and I'm proud to be back here today to pay down that debt by signing a bill that increases Lincoln University's state funding by more than \$3 million this year – an increase of more than 21 percent. Under my Administration, we're developing a new vision for higher education – one focused on competitiveness and workforce development, and grounded in access and affordability. That vision will help ensure that HBCUs like Lincoln can continue to open the doors to opportunity for Pennsylvania students for generations to come."

Sponsored by **Rep. Jordan Harris**, HB 1461 allocates funding for state-related schools – Penn State, the University of Pittsburgh, and Temple University – in addition to Lincoln University.

"I was humbled and honored to stand with the 14 students from Lincoln University who walked to the state Capitol to demand state funding for their educations. I introduced HB1461 as a part of the budget process, but also because we can't just provide our young people with access to high-quality education; we must also help them pay for it," said **Rep. Jordan Harris, Majority Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee**. "The advocacy of those Lincoln University students directly contributed to the Senate finally passing the funding. I'm happy today to highlight the significant progress we've made in securing funding for our state-related universities and to recognize these students whose collective efforts played a pivotal role."

"Today we're celebrating the movement of much needed funding for our state related universities, but we're also celebrating the action and commitment of fourteen students from Lincoln University – the Freedom Fourteen," said **Sen. Vincent Hughes**. "These students organized and walked sixty-six miles to Harrisburg to let lawmakers know it was time to stop playing politics with their education. With that sixty-six mile walk, Lincoln University students did what for 169 years, they have always done, lead. They

lead with purposeful action. With this bill signing on this campus of great history, we recognize that leadership today, and ask for others to emulate it in the future.”

“I want to thank the Lincoln University students who reminded us what advocacy in action looks like,” said **Sen. Carolyn Comitta**. “Their success in marching to Harrisburg and demanding that the legislature keep its promise to fund Lincoln was a testament to the power our young people have when they organize, mobilize, lace up their shoes, and make their voices heard. Furthermore, this was a success not only for Lincoln but also for the three other state-related universities.”

In his inaugural budget address, Governor Shapiro discussed the need to rethink our system of higher education and directed Department of Education Secretary Dr. Khalid Mumin to convene a working group of higher education leaders from across the Commonwealth. Including voices from the Commonwealth’s HBCUs in that conversation – in addition to voices from state-relateds, the PASSHE system, community colleges, and our independent colleges and universities – was a priority for the Department, and Lincoln University President Brenda A. Allen is a member of that working group. The Shapiro Administration is committed to developing a plan for higher education reform based on the working group’s final recommendations.

“Governor Shapiro’s presence on our campus is a testament not only to his strong support for higher education, but it speaks to the value that he places on Lincoln University and our students,” said **Lincoln University President Brenda Allen**. “We are extremely proud of the Lincoln students who were compelled to walk from our campus in southern Chester County to Harrisburg to emphasize the urgency of passing the State Appropriation Bill, which included increased funding for Lincoln to enhance support of student retention, graduation and success. I am thankful for the endorsement of our legislators and the Governor, and especially pleased to have had this unique opportunity to highlight the impact that the actions and voices of our students made in this year’s budget process.”

Lincoln University student leaders Drake Smith, who is a [member](#) of the Governor’s Advisory Commission on Next Generation Engagement, and MaKenzie Hanks joined the Governor for the ceremonial signing.

“Today we refer to ourselves as the first degree-granting HBCU. Lincoln University was the nation’s first pledge of emancipation – and a tiny school nestled in the rolling hills of Chester County has changed the face of this nation. I’m so glad that we have a Governor, state Senators and Representatives, and scores of local elected leaders that continue to agree with that great notion,” said **Lincoln University student Drake Smith**. “As Lincoln looks forward to 170 years of emancipation through education, we must all recommit ourselves to this mission of learning, liberating, and leading.”

“Thank you for joining us for the historic day. I want to give a special thanks to everyone that supported this effort – from the alumni to the people who love Lincoln, Dr. Allen, our Governor Josh Shapiro, and the legislators behind us to make this moment possible,”

said **Lincoln University student MaKenzie Hanks**. “This moment is not about policies or partisanship, and it's bigger than the 14 students who walked to Harrisburg. Today is about perseverance and freedom – and as we witness the signing of this bill, let's not look at just the financial allocation. Let's let this be a symbol of democracy and a symbol of what can be accomplished when we use our voices collectively.”

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