

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of the Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Opportunity Act of 2007. This bill authorizes grants to Minority Serving Institutions for technology improvements and infrastructure. Given the large gap in technology between MSI campuses and other American universities, this legislation is critical to improving MSI's educational advancements.

It is important to note that MSI's educational contributions are significant. For example, in 2000 at least 40 percent of all African American students who received a baccalaureate degree in physics, chemistry, astronomy, environmental sciences, mathematics and biology graduated from a historically Black college and university. Given their contributions to our society, we must do all we can to make sure that MSIs receive the most modern technology to keep up with other universities.

Unfortunately, at the current time, there is a "digital divide" between MSIs and other schools in technology infrastructure and programming. Less than half of the students attending Minority Serving Institutions own computers. Sadly, the majority of historically Black colleges and universities do not provide high speed access to the Internet [according to a Feb. 2004 report by the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education]. We also see this trend in minority communities around the country. Over 60 percent of the U.S. population uses the Internet at home, while only 46 percent of African Americans and 37 percent of Hispanics have Internet access at home [according to a Feb. 2004 report by the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education].

The Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Opportunity Act of 2007 will help eliminate the technological disparities at MSIs by establishing a grant program. These grants will help MSIs purchase equipment, make upgrades and improve their technology infrastructure as well as provide technology education services. In addition, these grants will promote the use of information communications technology to strengthen engineering, math and science research.

I would like to thank Mr. *Towns* and Mr. *Forbes* for their efforts to bring this bill before Congress and their commitment to rectify this disparity. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 694.