



## **Statement on the Georgia Senate Passing SB 235 "HBCU Innovation and Economic Prosperity Planning Districts Act"**

February 26, 2024

The Atlanta-based Partnership for Southern Equity (PSE) applauds the Georgia Senate for today passing overwhelmingly Senate Bill 235, the HBCU Innovation and Economic Prosperity Planning Districts Act.

For Georgia's 10 Historically Black Colleges and Universities, this landmark bill will not only impact funding, faculty and student recruitment, student research opportunities, and promote diversity, but also accelerate economic growth by investing in housing, entrepreneurship, infrastructure, high-speed Internet, greenspace, and other indicators of asset rich communities.

Along with PSE's founder and Chief Equity Officer, Nathaniel Smith, who helped craft the legislation, critical to the bill's passage has been the work of Senator Sonya Halpern. Her leadership in obtaining bi-partisan committee support and her advocacy for an innovative approach to position Georgia's HBCU's as even stronger centers of education and economic opportunity cannot be overstated. We are pleased to work alongside Senator Halpern as the bill moves to the next stage in the legislative process.

Our HBCUs' successes have come despite many systemic barriers to accessing resources and opportunities. At PSE, we seek to identify solutions capable of achieving equity, fairness, and justice. SB 235 is an extension of those beliefs. It is a way to show what equitable planning, development, and investment can provide our HBCU's - infusing much needed resources to historic institutions that contribute significantly to Georgia's economy, politics, culture, and civic life.

As it now moves to the Georgia House of Representatives, PSE will continue to monitor and support SB 235, and we encourage that the bill be brought to the House floor and passed as soon as possible.