

December 1, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
US Senate
S-230, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
US House of Representatives
H-222, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
US House of Representatives
H-204, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leaders Schumer and McCarthy:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), thank you for your efforts to support student loan borrowers who are experiencing financial hardship due to the pandemic. The President's August Executive Order (EO) extending the suspension of student loan payments and waiving interest rates to 0% through the end of this calendar year has provided crucial aid to borrowers, including healthcare professionals.

AACOM leads and advocates for the full continuum of osteopathic medical education to improve the health of the public. Founded in 1898 to support and assist the nation's osteopathic medical schools, AACOM represents all 37 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine—educating nearly 31,000 future physicians, 25 percent of all U.S. medical students—at 58 teaching locations in 33 U.S. states, as well as osteopathic graduate medical education professionals and trainees at U.S. medical centers, hospitals, clinics, and health systems.

As you continue to negotiate the next COVID-19 relief package and fiscal year (FY) 2021 spending bills, we strongly urge you to extend the suspension of student loan payments and interest, which expires on December 31, 2020. This extension should also retain the provision that allows for the suspended monthly payments to count toward satisfying Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program requirements as borrowers continue to make regular monthly payments. This student loan payment suspension would be considerably helpful to provide debt relief for frontline healthcare workers making significant and life-saving contributions to the pandemic response.

Congress and the Administration should work towards a more sustainable solution that maintains and preserves programs that help address graduate student debt and ease the significant financial burden faced by healthcare workers, including osteopathic medical school graduates, as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and future public health crises. Supporting our country's

physicians and medical students by reducing their outstanding medical education debt is in the nation's interest.

AACOM believes it is critical to ensure adequate resources and flexibilities to help foster the availability of a future physician workforce that is comprehensively trained to provide high-quality health care and meet the needs of the nation's diverse patient populations. We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to continuing our work with you during these challenging times. For additional information, please contact Julie Crockett, Associate Director of Government Relations, at jcrockett@aacom.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert A. Cain, DO". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert A. Cain, DO, FACOI, FAODME
President and CEO