



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
COLLEGES OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

October 5, 2012

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2354 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Rangel:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) which represents the administrations, faculty, and students of the nation's 29 colleges of osteopathic medicine at 37 locations in 28 states, I offer our strong support of the *Student Loan Interest Deduction Act of 2012*. Thank you for your leadership in introducing this important legislation that would help to alleviate the educational debt burden, which so many osteopathic medical students and graduates struggle with every day.

Today, more than 21,000 students are enrolled at osteopathic medical schools, and more than 20 percent of new U.S. medical students are training to be osteopathic physicians. By 2019, that number is expected to grow to 25 percent. AACOM recognizes the significant undergraduate and graduate debt so many osteopathic medical school students' graduate with and we continue to support policies and programs, including the *Student Loan Interest Deduction Act of 2012*, designed to help ease the strain of educational debt for students and graduates.

Over a twelve year period from 2000 to 2012, self-reported average osteopathic medical education debt of graduates who borrowed to attend medical school increased by an alarming 70%, with the average in 2012 being \$205,674. Concurrently, as osteopathic medical education debt surges, interest accrues on these loans over time, which considerably inflates the overall cost of student debt. This legislation would be effective in helping to mitigate the financial debt burden osteopathic medical school graduates face. Furthermore, as such measures would help lessen the weight of educational debt, many osteopathic medical students would be further encouraged to continue the trend of training and practicing in primary care, an arena that continues to face a physician workforce shortage.

On behalf of AACOM, I offer our strong support of the *Student Loan Interest Deduction Act of 2012*, and I thank you again for your commitment and leadership on working to promote measures that work to alleviate educational debt for our nation's osteopathic medical students. I look forward to working together on this important matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SC Shannon", written in a cursive style.

Stephen C. Shannon, D.O., M.P.H.  
President and CEO

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