

May 18, 2020

The Honorable Ann McLane Kuster
United States House of Representatives
320 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
United States House of Representatives
1722 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Kuster and Fitzpatrick:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), I offer strong support for the *Opportunities for Heroes Act* (H.R. 6699). Thank you for your commitment and leadership in introducing this important legislation, which would provide \$25,000 in student loan debt relief or education credit to essential employees during the COVID-19 crisis.

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 36 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine—educating nearly 31,000 future physicians, 25 percent of all U.S. medical students—at 57 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.

AACOM lauds your recognition of the crucial role that essential employees, including health professionals, play in delivering vital services and care to communities across the country during this pandemic. These essential employees are risking their lives to keep us healthy, fed, and well, and our association applauds measures such as H.R. 6699 that propose to give back to those who are currently giving so much.

Medical students graduate with disproportionately high debt, which, unlike other career paths, is frequently compounded by years of requisite post-graduate training. Consequently, medical student total loan repayment often exceeds two to three times the amount an individual initially borrows. As medical educators training the future physician workforce, we thank you for working to provide \$25,000 in student loan debt relief, which would help ease the significant burden being experienced both by our graduates and also by other first responders and essential employees as they help our country respond to COVID-19.

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On behalf of AACOM, I offer our strong support for the *Opportunities for Heroes Act*, and I thank you for your steadfast leadership and dedication in addressing such an urgent need during this critical time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert A. Cain, DO". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

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