



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
COLLEGES OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

June 13, 2019

The Honorable Judy Chu  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2423 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Chu:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), I offer strong support for the *Protecting Our Students by Terminating Graduate Rates that Add to Debt (POST GRAD) Act*. Thank you for your commitment and leadership in reintroducing this vital legislation, which seeks to reinstate graduate and professional student eligibility for Federal Direct Subsidized Loans.

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 35 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine – educating nearly 31,000 future physicians, 25 percent of all U.S. medical students – at 55 teaching locations in 32 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 federal financial aid plays in making graduate and professional studies accessible and your efforts to reduce the debt burden on students pursuing advanced degrees. As you know, medical students graduate with relatively high debt compared to many other graduate students, which could deter individuals from seeking these advanced degrees in the future. Unlike other career paths, the high debt burden of physician education is frequently compounded by years of requisite post-graduate training. Consequently, student total loan repayment often exceeds two to three times the amount borrowed for these individuals.

The nation faces a physician workforce shortage, and it is critical to educate and sustain a future workforce that will be able to collectively meet the nation's evolving and emerging health care needs. With a growing and aging population increasingly seeking treatment for chronic conditions across the nation, it is imperative that federal policies support the educational pathway of these future physicians.

On behalf of AACOM, I offer our strong support for the *POST GRAD Act*, and I thank you for your steadfast leadership and dedication on working to support an education system that will enable osteopathic medical students to access a financially sustainable future.

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Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SC Shannon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Stephen C. Shannon, DO, MPH  
President and CEO