

May 31, 2022

The Honorable Eric Swalwell  
174 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Swalwell:

On behalf of our 162,000 members, we would like to thank you for sponsoring H.R. 4726, the Student Loan Interest Deduction Act of 2021. This bill would double the student loan interest deduction (from \$2,500 to \$5,000) and eliminate the income limits that prevent those who live in high-cost areas from reaping the benefit.

Today's new dentists face unprecedented levels of debt as a direct result of paying for dental school. It has risen to the point that dental school graduates with student loans are now starting their careers with nearly \$305,000 in educational debt (\$270,125 for graduates from public dental schools and \$349,730 for graduates from private dental schools).<sup>1</sup>

The borrowing terms on federal student loans are generally more favorable than for private loans, but the interest rates are still daunting. They can reach as high as 9.5 or 10.5 percent, depending on the type of loan and market conditions. And the interest begins accruing immediately.

The financial hardship is a particular challenge for the 37 percent<sup>2</sup> of dental school graduates who pursue a low- or non-paying dental or medical residency. Even with a deferment, the interest continues to accrue throughout their residency period, adding tens of thousands of dollars to their debt.

H.R. 4726 will not eliminate the educational debt burden for early career dentists—or replace the need for comprehensive student loan reform. But making that debt more manageable will help offset the unprecedented financial challenges these essential health care providers face at graduation.

We applaud you for sponsoring this meaningful legislation and are pleased to offer our enthusiastic support. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Megan Mortimer at 202-898-2402 or [mortimerm@ada.org](mailto:mortimerm@ada.org).

Sincerely,

/s/

Cesar R. Sabates, D.D.S.  
President

/s/

Raymond A. Cohlma, D.D.S.  
Executive Director

CRS:RAC:rjb

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<sup>1</sup> Istrate EC, Slapar FJ, et al., Dentists of tomorrow 2020: An analysis of the results of the 2020 ADEA Survey of U.S. Dental School Seniors, *J Dent Educ*, February 2021; 85: 427-440.

<sup>2</sup> American Dental Education Association. (March 2020). ADEA Survey of Dental School Seniors, 2019 Graduating Class Tables Report Washington, DC. (Table 29. Respondents' Immediate Plans After Graduation by Level of Educational Debt).