

December 19, 2022

The Honorable Frederica S. Wilson
2445 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Wilson:

On behalf of our 162,000 members, the American Dental Association (ADA) would like to thank you for your work on H.R. 8872, the Lowering Obstacles to Achievement Now (LOAN) Act. Specifically the provisions in the LOAN Act that our members most appreciate are those that would allow graduate students, including dental students, to have access to subsidized loans and those that would lower interest rates on federal loans. We know that the LOAN Act was intended to address a myriad of student debt issues and although we support many aspects of the bill, we would still request that any future work on this or similar bills include additional student loan reforms.

The average dentist is graduating with over \$300,000 in student loan debt. This debt burden may affect practices choices by acting as a barrier to those that want to practice in underserved areas or by preventing a new dentist from being able to purchase a dental practice from a dentist looking to retire. Although the LOAN Act does include provisions that would ease some of the debt burden many of our students and new dentists have, there are numerous other policies that we would hope the LOAN Act could be amended to include. Here are some additional bills that the ADA would like to be considered for future amendments or student loan reform legislative packages:

- **H.R. 4122, the Resident Education Deferred Interest Act (REDI Act)**, would allow medical and dental residents to defer payments on their federal student loans—and delay the point at which interest begins to accrue—until after completing their residency.
- **H.R. 4726, the Student Loan Interest Deduction Act**, would double the student loan interest deduction (from \$2,500 to \$5,000) and eliminate the income limits that prevent those with higher incomes from reaping the benefit.
- **H.R. 7539, the Indian Health Service Health Professions Tax Fairness Act**, would allow dentists participating in the Indian Health Service Loan Repayment Program to exclude interest *and* principal payments from their federal income taxes, as well as certain benefits received by those in the Indian Health Professions Scholarships Program.
- **H.R. 1285, the Dental Loan Repayment Assistance Act**, would allow full-time faculty members participating in the Dental Faculty Loan Repayment Program (DFLRP) to exclude the amount of the loan forgiveness from their federal income taxes.
- **H.R. 2295, the HIV Epidemic Loan-Repayment Program Act (HELP Act)**, would offer up to

\$250,000 in educational loan repayment to dentists, physicians, and other health care professionals in exchange for up to five years of service at Ryan White-funded clinical sites and in health profession shortage areas.

Thank you again for including provisions in the LOAN Act that would support our students and dentists as they navigate their extreme levels of student debt. The ADA would be happy to discuss ways in which we could work with you and your staff to further improve the LOAN Act or other future student loan reform legislation. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Megan Mortimer, mortimerm@ada.org or 202-898-2402.

Sincerely,

George R. Shepley, D.D.S.
President

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

GRS:RAC:mm