

April 19, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chairwoman  
Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr  
Ranking Member  
Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

We, the undersigned organizations, write in support of S. 847, the *Student Loan Tax Elimination Act*, which would eliminate costly origination fees on federal student loans disbursed on or after March 27, 2020. We urge you to work with the Biden-Harris Administration to include this bill in its forthcoming “American Families Plan.”

Origination fees reduce the amount of loan dollars disbursed to borrowers by a certain percentage (1 percent for Direct Stafford Loans and 4 percent for Direct PLUS Loans). This tax on students creates confusion and increases costs for borrowers, who are responsible for repaying the withheld amount, plus the interest that accrues on that amount. This can result in hundreds or thousands of additional dollars owed, depending on loan type, loan amount and program length.

Co-sponsored by Senators Mike Braun (R-IN), Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), Chris Coons (D-DE), Josh Hawley (R-MO), Raphael Warnock (D-GA) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), the bipartisan *Student Loan Tax Elimination Act* would reduce costs for students and families who are making decisions about how to pay for college and graduate school. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues and many Americans struggle to make ends meet, the upfront taking of up to 4 percent of the proceeds of a federal student loan could be the difference between whether a student, particularly low-income students, can pursue and complete their degree or not.

In Award Year 2017-18, the federal government generated over \$1.7 billion in revenue from origination fees,<sup>1</sup> money that can and should go back into the pockets of students. As policymakers contemplate ways in which to make college more affordable, eliminating origination fees would help drive down costs for students.

Bipartisan support for eliminating this tax on students comes at a critical point for families, many of whom are still grappling with the health and economic harm brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. We

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<sup>1</sup> National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. (2019). *Issue Brief: Origination Fees*. [https://www.nasfaa.org/issue\\_brief\\_origination\\_fees](https://www.nasfaa.org/issue_brief_origination_fees).

urge Congress and the Biden-Harris Administration to support students and increase the affordability of higher education by including the elimination of origination fees on federal student loans in the “American Families Plan.”

Sincerely,

AccessLex Institute  
American Psychological Association  
American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE)  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
Council of Graduate Schools  
Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)  
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities  
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators  
National Education Association  
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association  
Young Invincibles

Cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House  
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, House Minority Leader  
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer, Senate Majority Leader  
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader  
Carmel Martin, Deputy Director for Economic Mobility, White House Domestic Policy Council