



PA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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Statement for the Record
Submitted to
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce
Markup of H.R. 6951 - College Cost Reduction Act
January 31, 2024

The PA Education Association (PAEA), representing the 306 accredited PA programs in the United States, welcomes the opportunity to submit a statement for the record regarding the proposals contained in the College Cost Reduction Act impacting affordability in higher education.

As the cost of higher education continues to rise, it is imperative that stakeholders work to advance policies that contain cost drivers for universities and ensure access to a high-quality education for all students. For PA education, a limited supply of clinical training sites, faculty shortages, and declining support from state governments for public institutions have been key issues in recent years that have put an affordable education farther out of reach for students. Unfortunately, rather than addressing these issues, the College Cost Reduction Act would instead limit access to higher education by imposing strict federal borrowing limits on students, ultimately forcing many into higher-interest options in the private market. **For this reason, PAEA strongly opposes the elimination of the Grad PLUS program and caps on annual borrowing at the median cost of programs included in the College Cost Reduction Act. We urge the committee to instead prioritize legislative action on cost drivers in higher education such as faculty and clinical site shortages that lead to tuition increases for students.**

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While PAEA opposes many of the federal student loan provisions contained in the College Cost Reduction Act, the Association supports other policies in the bill designed to reduce regulatory burden and improve access to clinical and student support services for programs. In 2023, PAEA strongly opposed the Department of Education’s proposal to significantly broaden the definition of third-party servicers to include many external partners leveraged by PA programs, including clinical training sites, centralized admissions services, and assessment vendors. While the Department reversed much of its initial proposal amidst stakeholder opposition, the College Cost Reduction Act takes a significant step forward in mitigating potential future costs for students by limiting the statutory definition of third-party servicer to its traditional interpretation. The College Cost Reduction Act would further reduce regulatory burden by reversing the Department of Education’s recent administrative capability regulations, which imposed ambiguous and duplicative requirements on institutions pertaining to geographically accessible clinical rotations. As part of a comprehensive effort to reduce costs in higher education, **PAEA strongly supports removing regulatory requirements that are not proven to contribute to a high-quality education for students, and the Association applauds the College Cost Reduction Act’s provisions related to third-party servicers and institutional administrative capability requirements.**

PAEA appreciates the opportunity to provide the Association’s perspective on the College Cost Reduction Act and affordability in higher education and looks forward to serving as a resource to members and staff. Should you require additional information or have questions, please contact Tyler Smith, Senior Director of Government Relations, at tsmith@PAEAonline.org or 703-667-4356.