

August 20, 2018

The Honorable Yvette Clarke
2058 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Paul A. Gosar
2057 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Simpson
2084 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Clarke, Congressman Gosar, and Congressman Simpson:

The American Dental Association (ADA), the American Dental Education Association (ADEA), the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO), and the American Student Dental Association (ASDA), would like to thank you for introducing H.R. 6149. As you know, this legislation will exclude certain federal loan repayments made to dental faculty from being included as gross income for the faculty member that receives it. This would prevent the dental faculty member from having to pay a potentially hefty tax bill on those federal loan repayments as defined in Title VII of the Public Health Service Act.

The dental faculty loan repayment program was created due to the significant difficulties in recruiting qualified individuals to fill faculty positions. A critical factor in recruiting and retaining dental school faculty from recent dental school or residency program graduates is the staggering level of student loan debt and income disparity with private practice.

We are pleased that Congress understands the importance of this program and because of your support, new dental faculty loan repayment grant cycles were initiated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in FYs 2016, 2017 and 2018. Programs may support loan repayment contracts over five years to recruit and retain faculty. Full-time faculty members are eligible for repayment of 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 percent of their student loan balance (principal and interest) for each year of service.

The program is already making a real impact in oral health training, and by alleviating taxation of such payments to the individual, H.R. 6149 will make the program even more effective in recruiting and retaining dental faculty.

The ADA, ADEA, AAO, and ASDA are happy to assist as needed with education and advocacy for H.R. 6149. Thank you again for your leadership in advocating for our nation's oral health.

Sincerely,

American Dental Association
American Dental Education Association
American Association of Orthodontists
American Student Dental Association