



FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS OF
SCHOOLS OF THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chair
House Education and the Workforce
Committee
2462 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Ranking Member
House Education and the Workforce
Committee
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

December 11, 2023

Dear Chairman Foxx and Ranking Member Scott,

As an association representing health professions organizations, we write to express our deep concern with Section 7(a) of H.R. 6585, the Bipartisan Workforce Pell Act, which would prohibit both undergraduate and graduate students at institutions subject to the endowment excise tax from accessing federal student loans. This currently includes at least 40 institutions of higher education from all around the country and other institutions that will soon join that list. We appreciate the House Education and the Workforce Committee's efforts to modernize the Pell Grant Program, as our groups are supportive of the program and also support proposals to expand Pell eligibility for graduate study. However, we believe Section 7(a) would inadvertently harm many students at these institutions and impede efforts to grow the healthcare workforce at a time when demand for services continues to increase. Furthermore, we are concerned with the potential precedent Section 7(a) could set, possibly leading to further erosion in federal support for students pursuing higher education at other types of institutions.

The Federation of Associations of Schools of the Health Professions (FASHP) was created in 1968 as a forum for representatives of health professions education institutions to address education's role in organizational patterns of health care; to encourage effective collaboration among the professions in education and practice; to prepare health professions education for the future; and to serve as a liaison with other organizations sharing an interest in health professions education. FASHP comprises 19 associations representing a health professions education community that includes 7,429 programs, institutions, hospitals, and health systems, and more than 1.3 million students, faculty, clinicians, administrators, residents, and researchers.

Healthcare workforce shortages, including among physicians, nurses, and mental and behavioral health care providers, have impacted virtually every community across the nation. This is especially true for people living in rural areas where staff shortages do not just lead to longer wait times for appointments, but can also lead to the closing of health care offices and clinics, which for many people living in these rural regions are the only source of health care access for miles. The U.S. is in dire need for a well-trained, diverse healthcare workforce ready to meet the needs of populations across the lifespan. It is in the best interest of the public for the federal government to support the education and training of future healthcare providers.

To ensure that the public receives the highest level of care from highly qualified professionals, graduate degrees are a requirement for licensure in most health fields. We recognize that health professional students rely on federal student loans to finance their education. In the absence of other, much-needed federal financial assistance, limiting access to federal student loans would create further obstacles to diversifying our institutions, our programs, and the healthcare workforce.

Although FASHP strongly supports the committee's bipartisan efforts to address the changing needs of the population and expand the types of degrees that receive Pell Grants, we believe that doing so by limiting the ability of students at certain institutions from accessing federal student loans would create a series of unintended consequences that harm our readiness to address the growing demands of the population, across many sectors. This is especially true for the healthcare fields, where the need for a diverse and robust workforce only continues to increase. We urge the committee to consider amending Section 7(a) of H.R. 6585, the Bipartisan Workforce Pell Act, as the bill comes up for a markup this week. We stand ready and willing to work with you to develop common sense, bipartisan solutions that will improve the health and well-being of all our communities.

Sincerely,

American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Council of Academic Physical Therapy
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Psychological Association
American Physical Therapy Association
Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of University Programs in Health Administration
Council on Social Work Education
PA Education Association