



Great Public Schools  
for Every Student

1201 16th Street, NW | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: 202-833-4000

Lily Eskelsen García  
*President*

Rebecca S. Pringle  
*Vice President*

Princess R. Moss  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

Kim A. Anderson  
*Executive Director*

September 18, 2019

U.S. House of Representatives  
Education and Labor Committee  
Higher Education and Workforce Investment Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they serve, we would like to submit for the record the following comments in connection with the September 19 hearing, “Broken Promises: Examining the Failed Implementation of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.”

Part of the bipartisan College Cost Reduction Act of 2007, Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) was created to encourage talented people to pursue careers as educators, firefighters, nurses, public defenders, and other forms of public service that typically pay less than private sector careers. In theory, public service professionals have their remaining federal student debt wiped away after 120 on-time, qualifying monthly payments—10 years’ worth of payments. In actuality, the Department of Education has denied more than 99 percent of the applications for loan forgiveness under the both the regular and temporary expanded program, mostly for missing paperwork, according to a [Government Accountability Agency report](#) issued this month.

[Educators’ experiences](#) with student loan debt underscore the need to strengthen the PSLF program. NEA supports the What You Can Do For Your Country Act (H.R. 2441), under which all types of federal loans and repayment plans would qualify for loan forgiveness; the bill would also require the Department of Education to give borrowers clearer information and guidance.

Loan forgiveness not only makes public service affordable, it demonstrates that America values the skills and commitment of the people who provide essential public services. Without PSLF, community life all across America would suffer. NEA stands ready to work with Congress to build on the success of this vitally important program.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association