



November 10, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
H-232 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
H-204, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Tax Cuts and Jobs Act – Elimination of the Student Loan Interest Deduction**

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents over 129,000 family physicians and medical students across the country, I write to express concern over Section 1204 of HR 1, the *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act*. In order to protect an important incentive that helps family medicine residents manage the overwhelming cost of their medical education, **the AAFP asks that Congress eliminate Section 1204 from HR 1 before the House puts it to a vote.** Section 1204 of HR 1 would repeal Section 221 of the Internal Revenue Code, which provides a deduction of up to \$2,500 for “the interest paid by the taxpayer during the taxable year on any qualified education loan.” The deduction applies only to filers with gross incomes less than \$80,000 (or \$160,000 for joint filers).

Data reported by the Association of American Medical Colleges indicates that the average first-year medical resident owes some \$200,000 in combined undergraduate and medical-school debt upon entering residency training. This high debt load deters many new physicians from lower-paying primary care careers.

Although AAFP members in full time practice generally earn incomes above the \$80,000 threshold to qualify for this deduction, those who are entering the specialty—i.e. those in the three-year residency training period after medical school—will be impacted. According to the 2017 Medscape Residents Salary and Debt Report, the average U.S. resident salary is \$57,200. As such, the loss of this deduction (\$7,500 over the course of a three-year residency period) would impact the next generation of family physicians before they even finish their training and receive board certification. We call upon Congress to preserve the deduction—a modest yet meaningful signal to the next generation of family physicians that the nation values their choice to enter this critical medical specialty.

Sincerely,

John Meigs, Jr., MD, FAFPP  
Board Chair

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