

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 27, 2018

The Honorable Betsy DeVos  
Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos,

We write to request that you discharge all existing and future Parent PLUS Loans taken out on behalf of students who become totally and permanently disabled.

Students who sustain a total and permanent disability (TPD) are discharged from having to repay most federal student loans, including William D. Ford Federal Direct Loans, Federal Family Education Loans, Federal Perkins Loans, and TEACH Grant obligations. However, parents who borrow funds on their child's behalf have no similar recourse based on a student's TPD status.

The average Parent PLUS Loan in 2016-17 was \$15,880, about 2.4 times the average undergraduate federal student loan<sup>1</sup>. This money is crucial—it fills in the gaps between student grants and soaring college costs, and for many students, allows them to attend college in the first place. Parents, like their children, agree to the terms and conditions of a PLUS Loan with the expectation that such an investment will support the promise of a better future. Federal law already recognizes that the difficulties that befall someone who sustains a TPD necessitate a pathway to student loan forgiveness. Parents also deserve access to this debt relief.

When a child becomes totally and permanently disabled, parents should not be forced to continue bearing the burden of student loan debt. Congress previously recognized the financial toll such a devastating shift in circumstance can have on these parents<sup>2</sup>. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Department was directed to discharge all Parent PLUS Loans taken out on behalf of students who became totally and permanently disabled due to the attacks. We urge you to discharge all loans of parent borrowers with totally and permanently disabled children.

If the Department is unable or unwilling to forgive Parent PLUS Loans borrowed on behalf of students who meet the TPD criteria, please explain why such a pathway will not or cannot be pursued, and what can be done by Congress or the Department to remove these obstacles. Should you have any questions, or would like to further discuss this request, please contact Kerry McKittrick with Congressman Langevin at (202) 225-2735 or Sam Mulopulos with Senator Portman at (202) 224-3353.

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<sup>1</sup> Baum, Sandy, Jennifer Ma, Matea Pender, and Meredith Welch (2017), Trends in Student Aid 2017, New York: The College Board <[https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/2017-trends-student-aid\\_0.pdf](https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/2017-trends-student-aid_0.pdf)>.

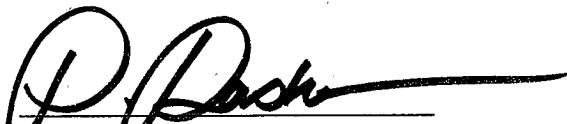
<sup>2</sup> Third Higher Education Act of 2006


Thank you for your attention to this important issue. We look forward to your response.

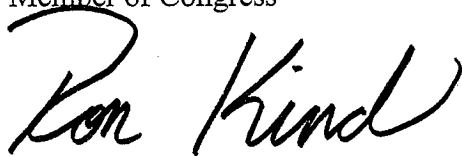
Sincerely,

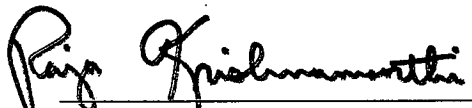
  
Jim Langevin  
Member of Congress

  
Rob Portman  
U.S. Senator

  
Peter Roskam  
Member of Congress

  
Chris Coons  
U.S. Senator

  
Ron Kind  
Member of Congress

  
Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress