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December 19, 2025
The Honorable Mike Lawler
U.S. House of Representatives
324 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Lawler:

On behalf of the American Academy of Audiology, the largest organization of, by, and for audiologists, dedicated to advancing quality hearing and balance care through professional development, education, research, and public awareness, I am writing to express our strong support for the HR. 6718, the *Professional Student Degree Act*, and to thank you for your leadership in introducing this important legislation.

Audiologists are doctoral-level, state-licensed health care professionals who diagnose, treat, and manage hearing and balance disorders across the lifespan. Ensuring a strong and sustainable audiology workforce is critical to maintaining patient access to high-quality hearing and balance care.

Doctor of Audiology (AuD) programs are rigorous, clinically intensive, post-baccalaureate professional degree programs that require extensive academic training, supervised clinical practice, and state licensure in all 50 states. The Professional Student Degree Act appropriately recognizes audiology alongside other licensed health professions and ensures that AuD students retain equitable access to federal student loan programs necessary to complete their education. By clarifying and expanding the definition of professional degree programs, this legislation helps prevent unintended consequences that could discourage students from entering high-need health professions, undermine workforce development, and reduce patient access to care. At a time when the CDC's National and Nutritional Study projects hearing loss in the elderly to increase by over 70 million people by 2060, policies that support the education and training of audiologists are more important than ever.

The American Academy of Audiology is pleased to endorse the Professional Student Degree Act and looks forward to working with you to advance this legislation. Thank you again for your commitment to supporting students, strengthening the health care workforce, and protecting access to essential hearing and balance services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick E. Gallagher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Patrick" and "Gallagher" being the most prominent parts.

Patrick Gallagher
Executive Director
American Academy of Audiology