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February 19, 2026

Honorable Michael Lawler
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
ATTN: Courtney Kaufman

Dear Representative Lawler:

Thank you for introducing H.R. 6718: the Professional Student Degree Act. On behalf of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU), I offer our endorsement of the bill.

AJCU represents 27 Jesuit, Catholic institutions of higher education in the United States, all sharing a mission grounded in a commitment to justice and service. At Jesuit institutions, our students are invited to do more: in service to God, to others, and to the greater good. This invitation to reflection often ignites interest in professions of service. (As you may know, ten percent of Congress is Jesuit-educated.)

Many of these professions, in health and teaching fields, to name just a few, also happen to be in fields that bring value to communities, but are also facing shortages. In the new proposed regulatory language from the U.S. Department of Education, which defines a narrow list of professional degree programs, many professional career pathways would exclude students with economic need. Your legislation provides a reasonable, balanced solution to this problem by expanding the list of professional programs so that students pursuing service-oriented career paths have access to federal student loans.

We are grateful for your leadership and look forward to working closely with your office to advance this important legislation. If you have any questions, please have your staff reach out to me directly at jmulson@ajcunet.edu.

Sincerely,

Jenny Smulson
Interim Executive Director and Vice President for Government Relations
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities