



Dear CSWE Members

For those of you who attended the Advocacy 101 session at APM or those of you who want to be more involved with the CSWE Public Policy Initiative, we wanted to provide you with an opportunity to educate your members of Congress on an important program for social workers. The CSWE Public Policy Initiative is concerned about potential threats to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program and income-driven repayment plans.

The PSLF program was created in 2007 to encourage the pursuit of public service careers despite the financial burdens of student loan debt. The program is designed to forgive the remaining balance of federal Direct Loans owed by full-time public service workers after they have paid on those loans for 10 years during public service employment. Under PSLF, those employed full-time in public service jobs who made 120 monthly payments on their loans are eligible to have their remaining balance forgiven. The Trump Administration has called for eliminating PSLF in their budget requests. This program is important for social workers because student loan burdens can discourage the pursuit of social work careers or make it difficult for social workers with student loans to reach significant financial milestones like purchasing a home or saving for retirement. In many cases, social workers are public servants who are providing vital services. Many communities are facing a shortage of social workers, and CSWE is working to protect this program.

It is important for members of Congress to hear from social workers (including students and social work educators) about the importance of these programs. E-mails and phone calls are a good way to contact members of Congress, you may also use social media.

Contact information for members of Congress can be found in the [House of Representatives](#) and [Senate](#) member directories. Make sure to include your name and e-mail address so you may receive a response.

- **Writing a Letter or an E-mail:** Correspondence by e-mail is a popular option for communicating with members of Congress, and e-mail is preferred over regular postal mail. We recommend visiting your representative's or senators' website to find an e-mail contact form. Your e-mail should be brief and to the point. Feel free to use the template here and include some of your personal background.
- **Making a Telephone Call:** When preparing to call members of Congress, craft your message clearly and concisely; you have less time to make your case on the telephone than if you communicate by e-mail. It is always helpful to write a short script of what you would like to say. Again, please feel free to use the template. Note that when calling, you may ask to speak with the representative or senator directly, but you will probably be asked to leave a message with a staff member. Be prepared with a clear message. You can also ask to leave a message on the appropriate staff voicemail, or leave a message and request a return call. Be prepared to provide your address and telephone number.
- In addition to using the House and Senate websites to obtain your senators' and representative's office phone numbers, you can call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121, provide your legislator's name, and ask to be connected with his or her office.



- You may contact your member on social media using the hashtag: #loan4giveness

CSWE is providing a letter template and links to identify contact information for your members of Congress to help you with this voluntary effort. Please feel free to draft your own letter or use this template

In addition, if you are being particularly impacted by the PSLF we would like to hear from you. Please contact Otto@lewis-burke.com with the CSWE PPI to share your experiences. All experiences are helpful, but stories from members in conservative and rural areas will be particularly useful in this effort.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact CSWE government relations representatives directly at Julie@Lewis-Burke.com or Otto@lewis-burke.com. They will be more than happy to assist you.

If you would like to provide CSWE with a copy of your correspondence, please send it to Otto@lewis-burke.com. Again, this is a completely voluntary opportunity.



The Honorable (Insert Senator/Representative's first and last name)
United States (House of Representatives/Senate-choose one)
(Insert office number and building)
Washington, DC 20515

October XX, 201X

Dear Senator/Representative (Insert Member's last name):

As a (social worker/social work student/social work educator/school of social work) in (Add your state or district), I write in support of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program. I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts with you on this vital program.

Social workers are critical to the social service safety net in communities throughout the United States. Social workers provide services in a variety of situations, such as social service agencies, schools, child welfare agencies, hospitals, community clinics, and mental and behavioral health settings. Social workers also provide services to a broad range of populations and help ensure that the holistic needs of individuals are met. The demand for social workers in our society will continue to grow. For example, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the need for social workers will grow faster than the average for all occupations through 2024, particularly for healthcare, mental health, and substance abuse social workers. BLS projects employment of social workers as a whole will grow 12 percent from 2014 to 2024, and projects 19 percent growth for healthcare, mental health, and substance abuse social workers. Social workers will continue to be needed as more people seek treatment for mental illness and substance abuse and to help aging populations.

The challenge to meet this workforce need is exacerbated by high student loan debt, which can be a deterrent to students choosing their field of study. The Institute for College Access and Success estimates 70 percent of students who graduated from public and nonprofit colleges in 2014 had an average of \$28,950 in debt. Programs such as PSLF and income-driven repayment plans allow students to choose careers that provide much-needed services to the public throughout the United States while also filling a workforce need. These programs help address the difficulty of recruiting and retaining social workers by providing federal assistance that allows more students to consider careers in social work without the burden of student debt. Personally, these programs are important to me because (Add why these programs are important to you and/or your experience demonstrating the need for social workers in your community).

To ensure a strong workforce in our communities, and to provide vital services to the public, please support the PSLF Program.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this request and providing the opportunity to express my views. I know you are faced with many difficult decisions, but your support for these programs is crucial for students and graduates across the United States.

Sincerely,
(Sign your name
Insert contact information)