

May 18, 2007

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
U.S. Senate  
309 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-1304

Dear Senator Durbin:

The American Law Deans Association (“ALDA”) is an association of over 130 of the deans of the law schools accredited by the American Bar Association. The members of the Board of Directors of ALDA are listed to the left. The views expressed herein in represent the views of the ALDA Board; they do not necessarily represent the views of each and every individual member of ALDA.

On behalf of the ALDA Board, I write in support of an important new program proposed in H.R. 2669, the Higher Education Access Act of 2007. This provision would allow low-income borrowers choosing long-term public service careers to have their undergraduate and graduate loans partially forgiven after ten years of “income-contingent” repayment. We request that during conference negotiations you retain the legislative language contained in the House version (Title I, Sec. 132). The House version contains a more inclusive definition of a public service job and will extend the forgiveness benefit to a broad range of public servants who have low incomes.

Many of our students enter law school with a goal of pursuing public service careers, yet the burden of college debt prevents some of our best and brightest graduates from committing to a life of public service. This provision offers assurances to students that loan repayments will not limit their choice of careers.

Thank you for your strong commitment to higher education and for all that you do to make higher education more affordable for all students.

Very truly,

David E. Van Zandt  
President