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August 22, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20050

Dear Mr. President:

The American Library Association (ALA), which represents the nation's 117,000 libraries, calls on the Biden Administration to cancel student loan debt for all borrowers. At the recent ALA Annual Conference & Exhibition, our members approved a Resolution Calling for Student Loan Cancellation, noting the disparate impact of student loans on minority and underserved populations.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for librarians and library media specialists is projected to grow nine percent from 2020 to 2030. An advanced degree is a standard requirement for a certified librarian position meaning that many librarians are student loan borrowers. While many library workers are employed by public-sector or non-profit organizations that are eligible for Public Service Loan Forgiveness, other library workers are employed by ineligible organizations and thus cannot take advantage of that important program.

The resolution approved by the ALA Council states as follows:

Resolution Calling for Student Loan Cancellation

Whereas student loan debt directly affects library workers;

Whereas the median pay for librarians and library media specialists is \$60,820 while the median pay for all master's degree holders is \$80,340;

Whereas 60% of graduates with master's degrees and 29.34% of all adults under the age of 30 have student loan debt;

Whereas the average student loan debt for master's degrees is \$86,368, adjusted for inflation;

Whereas student loan debt has been shown to negatively affect quality of life with 82% of student loan holders reporting their debt impacting their ability to save for retirement, 51% reporting delaying buying a house, 14% delaying starting families, and 18% struggling to purchase daily necessities;

Whereas the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has called student debt a racial justice issue that widens the racial wealth gap and threatens the financial stability for borrowers of color;

Whereas inflation has grown 7.5% in the last year with food prices growing by 7%, electricity by 10.7%, gas utilities by 23.9%, and housing prices by 4.4%;

Whereas wages are only expected to grow 3.4%;

Whereas student loan forgiveness programs, such as Perkins Loan Forgiveness and Public Service Loan Forgiveness, already exist;

Whereas the Department of Education has already exhibited the ability to cancel the student loan debt of select borrowers while President Biden has exhibited the ability to delay repayment;

RESOLVED, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members, calls on President Biden to cancel student loan debt for all borrowers.

Millions of Americans are impacted by the student debt crisis, held back by this debt. Our members become librarians for many reasons. Some become school librarians to work with young students and foster a love of learning. Some are inspired to work with marginalized communities to help them overcome hardships and find jobs. Some are dedicated to research and access to information. The ALA calls on the Biden Administration to use its existing executive authority to cancel student for more than 40 million Americans.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Alan S. Inouye, Ph.D.

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