



May 30, 2025

Dear Colleagues & Key Stakeholders,

Re: Update on Budget Reconciliation Process

The House of Representatives narrowly passed its version of a budget reconciliation bill last Thursday night, May 22, by a vote of 215 to 214. Despite extensive advocacy efforts on the part of higher education and health professions associations, only a handful of technical revisions were made during the bill's path from committee to floor. The sweeping changes to higher education policy that I shared in my May 5th communication were left almost entirely intact.

Current Legislative Status

With the House's completion of its work on its reconciliation bill, the focus now shifts to the Senate for the next phase of consideration. It is expected to begin floor proceedings around June 16, with legislative text likely released shortly before voting begins. Unlike the typical legislative process, the Senate plans to bypass committee review and bring the reconciliation package directly to the floor for consideration. Any policy differences between the House and Senate versions will need to be resolved through conference committee before final passage.

The next 2-3 weeks represent a critical window for influencing Senate action. **Now is the time to engage** in direct contact with your Senators, either by calling, emailing, or sending a letter (samples attached). [Click here for the Senate directory](#) to find your Senator's contact information. Given the compressed timeline and the Senate's plan to move directly to floor consideration, immediate action is essential.

Key Points

- Proposed cuts to federal student aid programs have passed the House and now await Senate action. These reductions specifically target programs that serve healthcare professionals, teachers, and other vulnerable student populations who rely heavily on federal loan programs for their education financing.
- The timeline is compressed, with Senate action expected within the next 2-3 weeks, creating an urgent window for advocacy efforts.
- Direct Senate engagement is critical since the upper chamber appears to be the last opportunity to modify or block these provisions before they potentially become law.

Critical Concerns in the Proposed Legislation from the House

1. Federal "Risk-Sharing" Model

- Would financially penalize institutions based on program outcomes regardless of performance indicators
- Disproportionately impacts private, nonprofit colleges and universities
- Particularly harmful to institutions with students entering service careers (teaching, ministry, social work)

- May force enrollment-dependent institutions to close, cutting off critical higher education access points for rural and marginalized student populations

2. Elimination of Critical Financial Aid Programs (beginning July 2026)

- Termination of the Grad PLUS loan program for new borrowers
- Eliminates subsidized loans for undergraduates, leaving only unsubsidized loans for undergraduates which means more interest charged.

3. Graduate Student Borrowing Caps

- \$100,000 for non-professional master's degrees (current cap \$138,500)
- \$150,000 for professional degrees (current cap \$224,000)
- Lifetime aggregate max capped at \$200,000 (current cap \$224,000)
- Could pose existential challenges to medical and health sciences programs
- Many students may not be served by the private loan market, particularly those studying theology, ministry, and the arts

4. Federal Aid Tied to "Median Cost of College"

- Effectively establishes price controls on colleges and universities
- Fails to recognize fundamental differences between public and private institution funding models
- Penalizes independent institutions for their lack of direct state support
- Would force more students into the private loan market

5. Pell Grant Eligibility Changes

- Redefines "full-time" enrollment as 15 credit hours per semester (up from 12)
- Reduces Pell Grant awards proportionately for every credit hour below 15
- Eliminates Pell Grant eligibility for students enrolled less than half-time
- Disproportionately impacts working adult students balancing jobs and education

Impact on Chiropractic Education and the Workforce

If implemented, these changes would:

- **Threaten the Viability of Chiropractic Colleges:** As enrollment-dependent institutions, chiropractic colleges could be forced to close due to large risk-sharing payments or reduced enrollment
- **Reduce Access to Chiropractic Education:** Creating insurmountable financial barriers that disproportionately affect students from middle and lower-income backgrounds
- **Exacerbate the Healthcare Provider Shortage:** Limiting the pipeline of qualified chiropractors, particularly in rural and underserved communities
- **Increase Educational Inequality:** Making chiropractic education accessible primarily to those with substantial personal or family financial resources

Talking Points

When communicating with legislators or stakeholders, consider these key messages:

- The proposed borrowing caps of \$150,000 fall significantly below the actual cost of chiropractic education (\$200,000-\$300,000), making programs financially unsustainable
- The risk-sharing model would unfairly penalize chiropractic institutions for graduates choosing service-oriented careers in communities that need them most

- Chiropractic education provides an essential pathway to addressing the nation's musculoskeletal health crisis and reducing opioid dependence
- Chiropractic graduates often serve in rural and underserved communities where access to non-drug, non-surgical care is limited
- These changes would disproportionately impact independent healthcare education institutions that lack state funding support

How you can prepare to help

- **Stay Informed:** Watch for updates from ACC as the legislation progresses through the Senate phase with specific action opportunities.
- **Ready Your Networks:** Begin informing your stakeholders about these issues so they are prepared to respond when action is needed.
- **Gather Impact Data:** Consider how these proposed changes would specifically affect your organization, members, or practice.
- **Identify Your Representatives:** Determine if your representatives serve on relevant committees or hold positions that will be influential in this process.

ACC's Commitment

We are working in coordination with the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) and other higher education associations to press for changes that protect student access, institutional sustainability, and mission-driven education. We will continue to keep you updated as this progresses.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to the future of chiropractic education and the profession.

Sincerely,



Anne Marie Munson, MA
Executive Director