



## **Higher Education Act**

We are following the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act primarily for its impacts on teacher preparation and teacher loan forgiveness programs. The House committee already passed the PROSPER Act, which eliminates all elements of HEA impacting teachers. Of biggest concern is the proposal to eliminate Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF), which many teachers use. Tell your members of Congress to support teachers and oppose any efforts to eliminate PSLF and other teacher loan forgiveness programs. House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairwoman Foxx is pushing her colleagues to support the bill and bring it to the House floor. AESA opposes the PROSPER Act. It eliminates all teacher preparation and teacher supports from the HEA and in its place creates a “one grant, one loan, two repayment plans” system. The bill:

1. Eliminates Title II, which includes the Teacher Quality Partnership Grants that support teacher residency programs through partnerships with school districts and Institutes of Higher Education.
2. Eliminates TEACH Grants, which provide \$4,000 per year for students interested in teaching. TEACH Grants require the recipient to teach four of her first eight years out of college in a high-needs school.
3. Eliminates all loan forgiveness programs for teachers, including Public Service Loan Forgiveness, Teacher Loan Forgiveness, and Perkins Loan Cancellation.
4. Creates only two loan repayment options – either pay all loans off in 10 years or pay 10 percent of your income until they are paid in full.

We are concerned that the elimination of these programs, particularly Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF), will increase teacher shortage issues throughout the country, particularly in rural areas. By eliminating incentives for college students to study education, teach in high-needs schools and remain in the classroom, this bill will make it harder for many to choose and remain in education. Because teacher salaries remain very low in many states, the two repayment plans available would leave teachers paying on their loans their entire career. The Senate, on the other hand, has made it clear that HEA reauthorization will not happen in this Congress. The fear is that if the PROSPER Act passes, it will become the starting point for negotiations in the next Congress.

### Talking Points (for Representatives only)

- Oppose the PROSPER Act! It will harm the district’s ability to hire quality new teachers and will leave teachers with higher debt and fewer incentives to remain in the classroom.
- Talk about teacher shortage issues in your district, if applicable, to illustrate the reality of the issue in the Representative’s district and provide them with cover for opposing.
- For Democrats, thank them for their commitment to supporting future teachers, as they are all committed to opposing the PROSPER Act.