April 22, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Speaker of the House  Senate Majority Leader
United States House of Representatives  United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515  Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader  Senate Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives  United States Senate
H-204, US Capitol  S-221, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515  Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy, and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the nearly 54,000 members of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) thank you for your hard work and commitment to reducing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on all Americans.

Across the United States, healthcare workers are stepping up to battle the COVID-19 pandemic on the front lines. The AANA has more than 7,000 student registered nurse anesthetists, many of who are being asked to assist in caring for patients. While we were pleased to see the CARES Act offer relief for some student borrowers, we believe more must be done to ensure students are not forgotten.

As you know, the CARES Act suspended payments and interest on all federally owned and direct student loans while allowing payments made during this suspension to count toward forgiveness. However, as many as 9 million federal student loan borrowers hold loans that were not covered by the CARES Act. Many of these loans have similar terms and conditions as the loans that are owned by the federal government. Often, these loans are held by financial institutions and non-profit/state entities or schools; the federal government supports or guarantees these loans against default. With this in mind, we urge you to include in the next emergency relief legislation, an expansion of the benefits of the CARES Act to more equitably provide relief for all student loan borrowers.

In addition, we ask you to consider targeted relief for students who are graduating and about to enter the workforce. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an unprecedented spike in jobless claims across the country and it is reasonable to expect this crisis to have an impact on the ability of graduating students to find jobs. We ask you to consider legislation such as H.R. 6502, which would allow graduating students to defer their loans up to three years.

The AANA stands ready to work with the U.S. Congress to develop policies that provide relief for students in an equitable manner. As you consider proposals for the next emergency relief package, we urge you to remember the students.
Sincerely,

Kate Jansky, MHS, CRNA, APRN, USA
LTC (ret)
AANA President

Randall Moore, DNP, MBA, CRNA
AANA Chief Executive Officer