

Timeline on Student Loan Caps

Federal Action

AANA Advocacy

JULY

- President Trump signs into law the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) that included many changes to student loan programs.
- OBBBA eliminated the Graduate PLUS loan program and sets loan caps at \$100,000 in aggregate for graduate degrees and \$200,000 in aggregate for professional degrees.
- CRNA programs would have met the criteria for professional degrees under the definition cited in OBBBA.
- Department of Education (ED) announces negotiated rulemaking process for implementing student loan provisions.

- Began tracking negotiated rulemaking process for impact on CRNAs.
- July 30th Federal Government Affairs (FGA) Webinar: Policy, Politics, and Power Plays - announced these legislative changes and that the effective date would be July 1, 2026.

AUGUST

- ED assembled Reimagining and Improving Student Education (RISE) Committee composed of stakeholders and ED representatives for two-week negotiations beginning in September.

- Joined Nursing Community Coalition and coalition of broad health professions on [two letters](#) to RISE Committee urging the inclusion of advanced nursing degrees in the professional student category.
- Reported on RISE Committee advocacy via the Hotline newsletter and posted coalition letters on our [comment letters](#) webpage.

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER

- September 29 - October 3 RISE Committee meets to begin negotiating proposed rule text on student loan provisions in OBBBA.
- October 1st federal government shutdown begins.
- RISE Committee continues to meet through October 3rd despite the shutdown.
- Stakeholders cannot come to agreement with ED on definition of professional student - ED decides to postpone discussions until the next meeting in November.
- Stakeholders on the committee argued for a broad definition per the language of the provision in OBBBA.

- October 8th FGA webinar: Policy, Politics, and Power Plays Webinar: Government Shut Down Edition - updated listeners on RISE Committee process, next steps, and AANA advocacy efforts.
- Worked with Program Directors to advocate with ED and collect data about the impact the lower cap would have on their programs and future CRNAs.
- Submitted a letter directly to the Under Secretary of Education Nicholas Kent about the qualifications of CRNAs signed by 85 Program Directors.
- Joined follow up letters to the RISE Committee from the Nursing Community Coalition and two broader coalitions of allied health professions.
- Updated on RISE Committee process, our coalition letters, and the activation of Program Directors throughout October in the Hotline Newsletter and Board Letter.
- Responded to individual members and state association leaders with questions about process and advocacy efforts.

NOVEMBER

- RISE Committee reconvened for their second week of negotiations.
- Stakeholders of the Committee presented a definition of professional student that would have included CRNAs.

- Requested meeting directly with the Under Secretary of Education.
- Held numerous meetings on Capitol Hill with congressional champions, committees of jurisdiction, and leaders of Congress on this issue.
- Continued to work closely with nursing community on messaging and policy.

- Under Secretary of Education countered the Committee's proposal with a definition that would exclude all nursing groups, including CRNA education programs.
- RISE Committee had many private discussions on the new definition and ultimately approved all language drafted during the two-week negotiation which included the exclusionary definition of professional student.
- ED began the process of writing the official proposed rule.

- Reported our letter to Under Secretary Kent signed by 85 Program Directors, conclusion of RISE Committee negotiations which left a draft definition of professional student that excludes CRNAs in Hotline and Essentials newsletters.
- Published [news alert](#) updating public on process and advocacy efforts.
- Activated targeted and broad grassroots actions to members asking them to contact their legislators to press ED.
- Supported Rep. Kiggans in submitting a [letter](#) to ED urging the inclusion of advanced nursing degrees.
- Published a [press release](#) about the impact on future CRNAs.
- Shared impact stories from students and Program Directors on social media.

DECEMBER

What we have so far and what to expect

- ED announced they will release their proposed rule with the official regulatory text and definition of professional student by early 2026. That means this rule could come out anytime in December or early 2026.
- There is expected to only be a 30-day comment period.
- ED wants a final rule as soon as possible as these caps will become effective on July 1, 2026.

- Released [fact sheet](#) on why CRNAs should qualify as professional students.
- Supporting a bipartisan Congressional sign on letter from Sen. Merkley to ED urging the inclusion of advanced nursing degrees.
- Activating members to contact their legislators in order to ask their legislators to sign onto Sen. Merkley's bipartisan Congressional letter.
- Worked with Congressman Mike Lawler's office on a [letter](#) to ED.

- Worked with Congressman Joe Courtney on a [floor statement](#) regarding this issue.
- Developing educational materials for members to support grassroots action.
- Activating grassroots with our program directors to key members of Congress.
- Activating grassroots to flood ED with comment letters when proposed rule is released.
- Creating FGA webinar to prep members on how to take action when the proposed rule is released.
- Continue activating on the Hill, in social media, traditional media, and directly with ED.
- Continue updates via social media, newsletters, and CRNA PAC alerts.

