



June 14, 2026

Dear Senator Jon Husted, Representative David Joyce, and Representative Marcy Kaptur,

My name is Matthew Freado, MBA, PA-C, and I am the Government Affairs Chair and a Past President of the Ohio Association of Physician Assistants. I am writing on behalf of the 7,000+ PAs in our state to urge you to make a critically needed change to add PAs to the list of professional degrees in the FY27 Labor- H Appropriations bill before passage.

On June 9, the House Appropriations Committee adopted language to address the impact of the Department of Education's recent student loan rulemaking on the health care workforce by exempting advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) from the cap — **but failed to include physician associates/physician assistants (PAs)**, who practice in the same clinical settings.

This omission comes despite clear evidence that:

- PAs are among the **most affected professions** under the Department of Education rule, with ~76% of PA student borrowers exceeding the new caps
- Excluding PA students from qualifying for professional limit loans risks the PA pipeline of critically needed medical professionals and threatens access to care – **harming rural and underserved communities** where PAs may be the only clinicians available

The House Appropriations Committee-passed L-HHS bill recognizes healthcare workforce concerns by adding advanced practice registered nursing (APRN) schools to a list of programs that qualify for higher loan limits but **fails to extend relief to PA students –even though PAs serve in the same clinical settings and in complex surgical positions.**

I am asking your office today to please ensure Congress provides relief by clarifying that Physician Associate/Physician Assistant programs qualify as “Professional Degree” programs. **Failure to act will restrict entry into the PA profession, shift students to escalating higher-cost private debt, and reduce access to care in rural areas and specialties such as primary care.** Please ensure any action taken up by Congress expands the House Appropriations Committee-passed proposal to include PA students and clarifies that PA programs qualify as “professional” degree programs under federal law.

You can read more on this important issue in [AAPA's fact sheet, here](#).

On behalf of our state's PAs and future PAs, thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. I know you care deeply about ensuring Ohio's residents can access the high-quality, cost-effective care that PAs provide in our communities. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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