



ROCKY VISTA UNIVERSITY  
Office of the President

*Rocky Vista University provides quality healthcare education while inspiring students to serve with compassion, integrity and excellence.*

December 11, 2017

The Honorable Virginia Foxx  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
United States House of Representatives  
2176 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Foxx:

As President and Chief Executive Officer of Rocky Vista University (RVU), I am writing to express RVU's views on H.R. 4508, the PROSPER ACT. RVU is a for-profit osteopathic medical school located in Parker, Colorado, with an additional location in Ivins, Utah. RVU fulfills a critical mission for the State of Colorado and the Mountain West region, which have a severe shortage of primary care physicians and other medical providers, by predominantly training individuals that will be general practitioners in these areas. We routinely have over 6,000 applications each year for approximately 160 slots and have the highest number of military connected students of any medical school in the country, aside from Uniformed Services University.

RVU strongly supports several provisions of this bill, such as the bill's elimination of Gainful Employment and 90/10 requirements, as well as the adoption of a single definition of an institution of higher education. We are also pleased that the bill standardizes how loan repayment rates are reported as opposed to the multiple versions adopted through regulation and guidance in the past few years. We appreciate the Committee's efforts to update and streamline many of the outdated provisions of the Higher Education Act (HEA). Overall, the legislation recognizes the fact that a high-quality education can be provided to students regardless of an institution's tax status, and the elimination of these requirements level the playing field between for-profit institutions of higher education and public and nonprofit schools. Since the school's founding, all of RVU's graduates have obtained residency placements. In addition, RVU's students' national board passage rates score in the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile in the nation. Clearly, our tax status has never impacted our ability to provide the education that our graduates need to be successful medical professionals, and we thank the Committee for addressing this issue in this bill.

We support many provisions in this bill, and we are pleased to see the reauthorization process moving forward. However, we are very concerned with other provisions in this bill. The bill's elimination of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program and forgiveness under Income-Based Repayment (IBR), as well as the limits placed on the ability of students seeking a medical education to borrow under the Title IV program, are of great concern for RVU and will likely have a negative impact on our students. Both PSLF and the forgiveness of balances after 15 or 20 years of repayment under an IBR plan provide valuable tools for our students to effectively manage their medical school debt as they determine their career path. For many of our students, these options are key to their ability to afford the extra education they need to become a primary care physician, rather than pursuing areas of medicine that can earn higher salaries.

With respect to borrowing limits, our students presently utilize both the Graduate and Graduate PLUS programs to finance their education at RVU. Despite the high cost of a medical school education, U.S. News and World Report Ranked RVU as the 10<sup>th</sup> cheapest private medical school in the country several years ago. In addition, our tuition and fees are comparable with the University of Colorado's medical school's in-State rate and are significantly cheaper than their out-of-State rate.

It is also important to remember that our student population, like all medical schools, are older and more likely to have their own families. Moreover, studying to become a doctor does not leave our students with the ability to hold part-time jobs to help fund their education while in school as attending RVU is a full-time endeavor. This means our students need the ability to borrow up to or near the cost of attendance in order to afford tuition and living expenses while attending school.

While H.R. 4508 does not continue the existing Grad PLUS program, it does provide higher loan limits for students pursuing health-related graduate degrees. Unfortunately, these provisions would leave a nearly \$40,000 gap per year between our cost of attendance and an RVU student's ability to borrow under the bill. This would likely force some of our students, who can qualify, to take out private education loans. However, private loans often carry higher interest rates and worse repayment terms. Additionally, some of our students would not be able to financially qualify for private loans, likely eliminating their ability to attend RVU and other similar schools in the medical profession. This would result in some of our most talented low-income students being unable to become doctors – a loss for our school, our State and the nation as a whole.

As the legislative process on the PROSPER Act moves forward, I would respectfully request that the Committee restore students' ability to borrow up to the cost of attendance of a medical school education, PSLF and forgiveness under IBR programs. Thank you for your attention to our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clinton E. Adams, DO". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small "DO" at the end.

Clinton E. Adams, DO, FACHE  
Rear Admiral, MC, USN (Ret)  
President and CEO

Cc: The Honorable Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
The Honorable Jared Polis