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June 24, 2026

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they serve, we urge you to VOTE YES on S.J. Res. 196 to overturn the Department of Education rule implementing caps on graduate loans imposed by H.R. 1, the reconciliation bill passed last summer. Votes on this issue may be included in NEA's report card for the 119th Congress.

Under this rule, an aspiring doctor or lawyer can borrow \$50,000 a year and \$200,000 in total while an aspiring educator or nurse can borrow only \$20,500 a year and \$100,000 in total. This unjustified approach favors 11 arbitrarily selected "professions" and devalues education—along with nursing, social work, and other essential forms of public service.

The message is clear, deeply troubling, and unacceptable: Educators' professional growth does not matter. Ultimately, however, it is our students who pay the price. Making it harder for educators to advance in their careers threatens the teaching profession and weakens the pipeline of highly trained educators. When educators feel unsupported, devalued, or unable to grow, talented professionals leave.

Students benefit when educators are empowered to build their knowledge and skills. Conversely, limiting access to affordable graduate programs undermines recruitment, retention, and commitment to the profession at a time when our nation faces a severe educator shortage. Adding insult to injury, new educators—including teachers, nurses, counselors, and higher education staff—must turn to costly private loans that do not qualify for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF).

For all these reasons, we urge you to VOTE YES on S.J. Res. 196.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Johnson Trinca
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association