



July 29, 2008

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman
Education and Labor Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Howard McKeon
Ranking Member
Education and Labor Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Miller and Ranking Member McKeon:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we thank you for your efforts to complete the Higher Education Act reauthorization. We fully support the nursing language you have included in the Conference Report. This comprehensive piece of legislation is a testament to the commitment you and your staff have to improving our nation's higher education system.

We are particularly pleased to see the inclusion of the *Capacity for Nursing Students and Faculty Program*, Section 804. The major barriers to increasing student capacity in schools of nursing are an insufficient number of faculty, admission seats, clinical sites, classroom space, clinical preceptors, and budget constraints. This program will address these issues and significantly benefit nursing schools, faculty, and students across the country. Additionally, this section incorporates Representative Carolyn McCarthy's *Nurse Faculty Pilot Project*, which supports partnerships between hospitals or health facilities to improve alignment between nursing education and healthcare delivery.

The Conference Report also sponsors nursing education under two existing programs, the *Loan Forgiveness in Areas of National Need* (Section 430) and the *Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need* (Section 703). We thank you for recognizing the importance of assisting nursing students through loan forgiveness given the national nursing shortage. More importantly, we appreciate your understanding that the nurse faculty shortage plays a significant role in addressing the nursing shortage. By authorizing programs to educate nurses with graduate degrees, you have helped to address this issue.

We commend your Committee and the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee for working to prepare a Conference Report that will help address the higher education needs of the nursing workforce. In addition, we sincerely appreciate the dedication of your Committee staff and individual members, particularly Representative McCarthy, who have championed our nursing programs.

Sincerely,

American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
American Nurses Association
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses