



The American  
Occupational Therapy  
Association, Inc.

Occupational Therapy:  
*Skills for the Job of Living*

July 30, 2008

The Honorable George Miller  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2205 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller:

On behalf of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), the national professional association representing the interests of more than 100,000 occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, and students of occupational therapy, I am writing in support of the Higher Education Opportunity Act and to thank you for supporting the inclusion of occupational therapy as an occupation of national need that can qualify for student loan forgiveness. The legislation will improve both the access to and quality of higher education across the country. Additionally, the inclusion of specific professions of national need, such as occupational therapy under Sec. 430 of the Conference Report will enhance recruitment of occupational therapists in rural and urban underserved areas by providing relief from student loan debt.

Occupational therapy is a skilled health, wellness and rehabilitation service with the goal of improving function, independence, and quality of life so that individuals can lead more productive and rewarding lives. Occupational therapists work with individuals across the life span and in settings ranging from community mental health centers to acute care hospitals, schools, nursing homes, and with veterans and military personnel. Among other important provisions, AOTA particularly supports the inclusion of loan forgiveness for occupational therapists who work with children, adolescents, and veterans. AOTA believes the provision will increase recruitment of occupational therapists broadly, but it will also guide existing professionals and students to work with these important groups of individuals.

Your support and recognition of occupational therapy as a valued health, wellness, rehabilitation and education profession is greatly appreciated by AOTA and its members. We look forward to working with you to see that the Higher Education Opportunity Act becomes law. Thank you for your leadership in developing a bi-partisan bill that will improve higher education and make it more accessible. If we can be of assistance to you in relation to this bill or any matter regarding occupational therapy education in general, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina Metzler', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Christina Metzler  
Chief Public Affairs Officer

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