

July 25, 2018

Dear Representatives of the 115th Congress:

On behalf of the Council on Foundations, I am writing to express strong support for the Workforce Development Through Post-Graduations Scholarships Act (H.R. 6486). Introduced on July 24, 2018, by Representatives Darin LaHood (R-IL) and Terri Sewell (D-AL), this bill would allow charitable foundations to administer post-graduation scholarship grant programs to combat “brain drain,” stimulate regional economic growth, and help address the growing student debt crisis.

A post-graduation scholarship is a charitable grant that foundations would make to attract individuals with career skills needed in a particular region to the make their homes and build their careers in that community. Similar to a traditional scholarship, a post-graduation scholarship would be awarded as a tax-exempt grant to an individual—who has already completed a degree or technical program in a career field that is needed in a particular region—in order to pay off a portion of the individual’s student loans. As with traditional scholarships, these programs would establish eligibility requirements as well as a process to verify that those requirements continue to be met through the duration of the scholarship award agreement.

For example, a community foundation in a region that is facing a shortage of nurses might offer a post-graduation scholarship—to be paid in quarterly installments over a period of three years—under the conditions that the individual live and be employed within a particular range of zip codes for a set number of years. As is common with traditional scholarships, these payments would likely be made to the loan provider and may only cover a portion of the individual’s student loans—leaving him or her responsible for any remaining amount.

This bipartisan bill demonstrates the innovative spirit of the philanthropic sector when it comes to addressing some of the most challenging issues our communities face. It also demonstrates the positive impact that philanthropy and government can make when working collaboratively to address shared priorities.

We urge you to cosponsor H.R. 6486 and push to put this measure up for a vote on the House floor.

Sincerely,



Hadar Susskind
Senior Vice President of Government Relations