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Members of Congress Recognized for their Support of Graduate-Professional Education

On Monday March 12th, the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) held its annual Gala, in conjunction with it's bi-annual Advocacy Summit and Legislative Action Days (LAD) that were held March 10th - March 13th 2018. During the Gala, NAGPS recognized three members of Congress for their commitment to, and support of, graduate-professional education by presenting them with the "Advocate of Graduate Education Award". Samantha Hernandez, NAGPS Director of Legislative Affairs, comments, "The Advocates of Graduate Education have demonstrated a willingness to protect graduate-professional student interests and acknowledge the value of graduate education. We are grateful for their efforts, and most importantly for the understanding of how those with graduate degrees continue to help all communities prosper." The 2018 NAGPS Advocate of Graduate Education Award recipients are as follows:

- **Rep. Kevin Brady** (R-TX 8): Rep Kevin Brady is Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. During the debate on the Tax Cut & Jobs Act, Chairman Brady gave assurances that provisions in the bill that would harm graduate and professional students, such as taxing graduate tuition waivers and eliminating the student loan interest deduction, would be left out in the reconciliation process. Those provisions were ultimately excluded from the final version of the bill.
- **Rep. Lloyd Doggett** (D-TX 35): Representative Lloyd Doggett has a long track record of supporting higher education through efforts to keep college affordable, accessible, and easing the financial aid process. During the debate on the Tax Cut & Jobs Act, Rep. Doggett introduced an amendment to strike section 1204 from the bill to save the Student Loan Interest Deduction, Employer Education Assistance Deduction, the Teacher Expense Deduction, and to expand the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC). Rep Doggett is quoted as saying, "Public education is a right that, through hard work, provides a lifetime of benefits, not a privilege reserved for a fortunate, wealthy few. Working to make college affordable is among my top priorities."
- **Rep. Pete Sessions** (R-TX 32): During the Tax Cut & Jobs Act debate, Representative Pete Sessions authored a dear colleague letter urging leadership in the House of Representatives and the Senate to remove the provision in the bill that would repeal the income exclusion for graduate tuition waivers stating, "A repeal of the income exclusion for graduate tuition waivers would harm our nation's students, undermine our competitive position, and hold back economic growth. We strongly urge you to ensure that this harmful provision is not in the final version of the Tax Cut & Jobs Act."

The National Association of Graduate-Professional Students applauds these members of congress for their support of graduate education. Damon Chambers, NAGPS President & CEO, further states, "We are very fortunate to have our legislative leaders advocating on behalf of graduate and professional students. We encourage all members of congress to recognize the vital role that graduate education plays in the prosperity of the U.S., and to support legislation that increases its accessibility, affordability, and expands opportunities for all. We also invite our members of congress to include NAGPS in these conversations as we collaborate in advancing graduate and professional education through advocacy, leadership, research, and partnerships."

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[NAGPS](http://NAGPS.org) is a national non-profit composed of graduate and professional student governments across the US that represents hundreds of thousands of graduate and professional students at a diverse group of member institutions.