



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE-PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

Friday, August 26th, 2022

**Organization:** *National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS)*

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## **National Graduate Student Organization Calls on the White House to Support Equitable Graduate Student Support and Debt Relief**

On Wednesday, August 24th, 2022, President Biden announced a [three-part plan](#) to roll out a final extension of the student loan repayment pause, provide targeted debt relief to low- and middle-income families, and implement increased management of current and future student loans. According to the [Department of Education](#), this new wave of student debt relief initiatives will provide the following for students from low- and middle-income backgrounds:

- Final extension of the loan repayment pause until December 31st, 2022;
- Loan cancellation up to \$20,000 for recipients of Federal Pell Grants who also make less than \$125,000 (for individuals) or \$250,000 (for married couples or heads of households);
- Loan cancellation up to \$10,000 for students who were non-Pell Grant recipients and who are also under the same total income restrictions;
- Forgive student loans after ten (10) years of repayments for borrowers with original principal loan balances of \$12,000 or less;
- Cover unpaid monthly interests as long as borrowers are making repayments;
- Increase of non-discretionary income up to 225 percent of the federal poverty level, or \$15 per hour at 40 hours per week;
- Reduction of undergraduate loan income-driven repayments from ten percent (10%) to five percent (5%) of discretionary income (borrowers with both undergraduate and graduate loans will pay a weighted average rate);
- Inclusion of those who work for nonprofit, military, federal, state, tribal, or local governmental organizations in the [Public Service Loan Forgiveness](#) program, allowing cancellation of debt after ten (10) years of service and loan repayments;
- Action against any institution that contributes to the loan crisis, accomplished by publishing an annual watch list of the institutions with the worst student debt levels.



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While this slate of student debt relief and forgiveness programs marks a [historic federal attempt](#) at student support, graduate and professional students will see less benefits from these programs than their undergraduate counterparts due to the substantial level of disparity in student loan debt that graduate and professional students hold.

## **Quick facts regarding graduate and professional student debt and workforce information:**

- Graduate and professional students make up an estimated [25.2 percent](#) of federal loan borrowers;
- Graduate and professional students hold a staggering [46.7 percent](#) of all student loan debt;
- Graduate and professional students are largely [excluded from Federal Pell Grants](#);
- Student loan debt is [not dischargeable](#) in bankruptcy;
- Student loan debt is the [largest non-housing debt](#) nationally at \$1.59 trillion
- [42 percent](#) of graduate degree holders work in the public and private sectors outside of academia;
- [27 percent](#) of employers now require Master's degrees in jobs that once only required a Bachelor's;
- The average Masters student holds around [\\$71,287](#) in student loan debt;
- The average doctoral student holds around [\\$159,625](#) in student loan debt.

**NAGPS strongly recommends** policies which will ensure equitable treatment of graduate student loan borrowers, as well as those which will help in lowering the cost of higher education and the future accumulation of student debt, including the following:

- Inclusion of graduate students in the Federal Pell Grant program at funding rates proportional to the cost of graduate education;
- Loan cancellation for graduate students commensurate with the higher burden of debt they currently hold;
- Increase in federal research funding available to graduate students;
- Return of bankruptcy protections for all student loans, private and federal.



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## **Actions graduate students can take to bolster support for graduate and professional students:**

- Tell us how this Student Debt Relief impacts you personally by filling out our [survey](#). Share this survey link with your graduate student friends on your social media.
- Use your social media platforms to share your thoughts on this plan with the Department of Education ([Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#))!
- Contact your federal ([Senate](#) and [House](#)) and state representatives using our handy [NAGPS U.S. Representative Contact Sheet](#) and ask them to support the following:
  - [S.2598](#) FRESH START Through Bankruptcy Act
  - [H.R.4907](#) Private Student Loan Bankruptcy Fairness Act of 2019
  - [S.4459](#) - Student Debt Relief and College Affordability Act
  - [H.R.4002](#) Expanding Access to Graduate Education Act
  - [H.R.2627](#) Pell to Grad Act
- Attend the NAGPS Legislative Action Days to learn more about graduate student loan debt and how to talk to representatives about the importance of graduate student debt.