



National Asian Pacific American Bar Association

Statement of Support for the Federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program

Endorsed January 2018

WHEREAS, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) is the national association of Asian Pacific American attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students, representing the interests of over 50,000 attorneys and over 80 national, state and local Asian Pacific American bar associations; NAPABA members include solo practitioners, large firm lawyers, corporate counsel, legal service and non-profit attorneys, and lawyers serving at all levels of government; and NAPABA is committed to addressing civil rights issues confronting Asian Pacific American communities and people of color;

WHEREAS the Federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF) was established to incentivize new lawyers to seek careers in the public service sector in exchange for a reduction and/or forgiveness of their student loan obligations; To qualify lawyers must remain employed in qualifying public sector jobs for a period of ten years during which they are required to make 120 qualifying monthly payments (typically 10 years) under a qualifying repayment plan;

WHEREAS according to *The Graduate Student Debt Review* by the new America Education Policy Program, law students are graduating with more debt than ever before; in 2012, 86.3 percent of graduates with a law degree had student loan debt at graduation, which is a 5 percent increase from 2008; the 90th percentile had debt from undergraduate and law school of over \$224,000 and the 75th percentile had debt of almost \$194,000; and the median debt was over \$140,000;

WHEREAS according to the American Bar Association, there is a sizeable gap in salaries between the private sector and the non-profit/public sector employment;

WHEREAS due to the sizeable gap in salary, non-profit and public service employers rely on PSLF to attract legal talent; without this additional incentive, many new lawyers would be forced to choose between a higher-paying position, regardless of their interest in the job; PSLF has given lawyers in the public sector financial peace of mind and employers a stable workforce;

WHEREAS the President's FY2018 budget proposal includes eliminating funding for PSLF in its entirety which could significantly affect the APA community;

WHEREAS the APA community would face both direct and indirect consequences if PSF is eliminated; according to statistics from 2008, the average APA with a bachelor's degree had over \$26,000 in debt four years after graduation; the burden of this debt would only increase if the person pursues law school;

43 **WHEREAS** the general low-income and diverse communities are also effected; without PSLF,
44 many public service organizations that serve and aid these communities could face skilled-labor
45 shortages; those who aspire to work for these organizations may be forced to pursue other
46 opportunities because they cannot financially justify public-service work; if these organizations
47 are understaffed, their capabilities will be severely restricted;

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49 **WHEREAS** NAPABA recognizes that PSLF benefits Asian Pacific American and other diverse
50 attorneys who are integral to the legal community; they provide valuable public-interest and
51 public-sector perspectives, which are critical to enhancing national-level conversations and
52 policy setting;

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54 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NAPABA:**

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- 56 1. Supports continued and full funding of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program,
57 including funding to cover the costs of individuals who have relied on the program;
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 - 59 2. Supports any expansion or modifications of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness
60 Program that provides support for attorneys serving in public sector or public interest;
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 - 63 3. Opposes cuts to funding and/or elimination of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness
64 Program.
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 - 66 4. Authorizes its president, board, and staff to communicate the content of this resolution to
67 its members, affiliate and associate organizations, other bar associations, members of
68 Congress, the Administration, the press, and others and to take steps to implement this
69 resolution, as they deem necessary.
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 - 71 5. Supports this resolution as a policy priority until it is withdrawn or modified by
72 subsequent resolution.
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