March 27, 2017

The Honorable Peter J. Roskam
U.S. House of Representatives
2246 Rayburn House Office Building
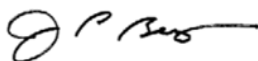Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Roskam:

The National Council of Higher Education Resources (NCHER) supports passage of H.R. 1659, the Stop Taxing Death and Disability Act, which would eliminate the tax burden on borrowers and their families when a federal or private student loan is discharged due to the death or total and permanent disability of the borrower or, for a Federal PLUS Loan, the student on whose behalf a parent borrowed. This important legislation will end the unfair practice where these borrowers are given a tax bill on the amount of the loan that is discharged by the federal government and private lenders, just as if it were regular income.

NCHER has long supported efforts to remove the unfair tax burden on borrowers and their families facing the difficult circumstances of death or total and permanent disability. Whether a grieving parent of a deceased or disabled child, the family of a fallen or severely wounded soldier, or a borrower facing a life-threatening illness, the federal government should not impose an additional financial burden on those borrowers whose student loans are discharged, a benefit they are entitled to under the law.

We also want to commend you for the comprehensive approach you are taking to address this problem. Many state, non-profit, and private education lenders offer discharges under terms similar to those offered by the federal government. These borrowers deserve to have all of their education debt treated uniformly under these difficult circumstances.

NCHER appreciates your work to assist borrowers and their families avoid unfair taxation when student loans are forgiven due to death or total and permanent disability. Our organization and membership are pleased to endorse this important legislation.

Sincerely,

James P. Bergeron
President

cc: The Honorable Ron Kind
        The Honorable Ryan Costello
        The Honorable Chellie Pingree