



Hill Meeting Talking Points:

Preserve the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program

INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE



Introduce yourself as a constituent and a psychologist. Remember to include the name of your university/institution or organization you work for. Explain you are here to urge him/her to support the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program (PSLF) during the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. The PSLF program increases access and affordability to higher education while, at the same time, providing a pathway to meaningful work in non-profit or government sectors, including mental and behavioral healthcare, education and public safety, for graduates with loan debt.

PERSONALIZE THE ISSUE



Consider your own personal story or stories of your friend and colleagues. Provide information about unmet mental and behavioral health needs of underserved populations in your community (e.g. older adults, children, those suffering from chronic illness, veterans, victims of abuse, and victims of natural disasters). Share examples of the impact of debt on students that would like to pursue advanced degrees and subsequently pursue career paths in public service, often for lower pay, in challenging environments and with long hours.

EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOLOGY TO YOUR COMMUNITY AND THE NATION



Using anecdotes, underscore the contributions that psychologists working in non-profit and government settings bring to communities in areas like education, social services, foster care, and healthcare settings including those involved in the treatment of substance abuse including opioid use disorders. What are you doing to make a difference in your community.



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SHARE THE DATA



You may want to memorize one or two key data points or statistics that emphasize the need for continuation of the PSLF program. Data can be impactful when coupled with a compelling story. For example, psychologists and other highly trained mental health providers are needed to fill our nation's critical mental health workforce shortages. The need for psychologists is expected to grow faster than average from 2014-2024 with increased demand for services in schools, hospitals, mental health centers and social service agencies."

THE "ASK"



Ask your Senators and Representative to preserve the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program during the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Ask your Representative to join the bipartisan Public Service Loan Forgiveness Caucus.

EXPRESS APPRECIATION FOR THE VISIT



Thank the Senator/Representative/staff for giving you the opportunity to meet with him/her, and ask for them to show their support for Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. Ask if there is any further information that you (or APA) can provide. Let them know you would like to follow up with them, and keep abreast of progress on the Higher Education Act reauthorization and the PSLF program.