

June 7, 2007

The Honorable Carolyn McCarthy  
106 Cannon House Office Building  
The U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman McCarthy:

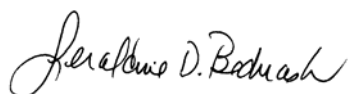
I am writing on behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) to thank you for introducing the *Teacher and Nurse Support Act of 2007*. AACN represents more than 600 schools of nursing at public and private universities and senior colleges with baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs that educate over 240,000 students and employ over 12,000 faculty members. These institutions are responsible for educating approximately half of our nation's registered nurses and all of the nurse faculty and researchers in the U.S.

By amending the *Higher Education Act*, your legislation provides loan forgiveness and loan cancellation of up to \$17,500 for nurses that agree to work full-time in a clinical setting or as a member of the faculty at an accredited school of nursing. Budget constraints, an aging faculty, and increasing job competition have contributed to a significant shortage of nursing faculty.

Over the last nine years, the bottleneck in the nursing shortage has become more apparent as constraints in nursing education programs have intensified. According to AACN's report on *2006-2007 Enrollment and Graduations in Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing*, U.S. nursing schools turned away 42,866 qualified applicants to baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs in 2006 due to an insufficient amount of faculty, clinical sites, classroom space, and clinical preceptors, as well as budget constraints. Almost three quarters of the nursing schools responding to the 2006 survey pointed to faculty shortages as a reason for not accepting all qualified applicants into nursing programs. This bill provides the financial incentives needed to attract and retain essential nursing faculty.

AACN supports your bill and your ongoing efforts to provide and expand educational opportunities for nursing students and nurse faculty during a time of critical shortage.

Sincerely,



Geraldine "Polly" Bednash, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Executive Director

**ADVANCING HIGHER EDUCATION IN NURSING**