

Science Policy Office

502 C St. NE Washington, DC 20002 | Phone: 202-408-5558 | sciencepolicy@sciencesocieties.org

www.agronomy.org | www.crops.org | www.soils.org

Protect the STEM graduate student pipeline, call Congress today

The recently unveiled Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (H.R. 1) eliminates the non-taxable treatment of tuition reductions for graduate students – **significantly increasing the potential tax burden on grad students.**

Internal Revenue Code Section 117(d)(5) significantly lowers the cost of graduate education by providing many Ph.D. and Masters students with a non-taxable tuition reduction while they serve as teaching or research assistants. **The proposed tax plan would repeal this provision.**

Tuition reductions, and the fact that they are not taxable income, help to make higher education affordable, but with the repeal of Section of 117(d)(5), **graduate students would be subject to a sizable tax increase**, with estimates of as much as 300%.

Under H.R. 1, tuition waivers will be counted as taxable income and ultimately cost graduate students thousands of dollars per year. If the repeal is approved, getting an advanced degree in the U.S. could become unaffordable.

The ASA, CSSA and SSSA Science Policy Office does not want to see that happen, but we need your help. We need you to tell Congress that these tuition reductions for graduate students are vitally important to the future of the U.S. STEM workforce and our nation's innovation pipeline. We are asking you to email your members of Congress today and **urge them to oppose the repeal of Section 117(d)(5) and keep graduate student tuition reductions as non-taxable.**

Email your members of Congress here.

Please forward this message to your family, friends, colleagues and anyone else who can help make a difference.

Headline: Amend H.R. 1 to keep grad student tuition reductions as non-taxable

Dear XX,

As a constituent living in your district, I am writing to ask you to oppose the provision of the proposed Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (H.R. 1) which repeals Internal Revenue Code Section 117(d)(5).

Currently, Section 117 (d)(5) significantly lowers the cost of graduate education by providing many Ph.D. and Masters students with a non-taxable tuition reduction while they serve as teaching or research assistants. The proposed tax plan would repeal this provision.

Tuition reductions, and the fact that they are not taxable income, help to make higher education affordable, but with the repeal of Section of 117(d)(5), graduate students would be subject to a sizable tax increase.



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Graduate students in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields are disproportionately affected by this provision – 60 percent of graduate students that use tuition reductions are in STEM fields. If Section 117(d)(5) is repealed, these valuable students may choose to forgo higher education or take their talents abroad. Either outcome will further erode the nation's economy and global competitiveness.

I recognize the importance of tax reform and the difficult challenges associated with accomplishing a fair and streamlined tax code. However, I am asking you to oppose the provision of H.R. 1 that repeals Section 117 (d)(5) and to secure our nation's innovation pipeline by keeping graduate student tuition reductions as non-taxable.

Thank you for your consideration.

