



May 11, 2006

The Honorable Charles W. Boustany, M.D.
1117 Longworth House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-1807

**Association of
American Medical Colleges**
2450 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-1127
T 202 828 0400 **F** 202 828 1125
www.aamc.org

Jordan J. Cohen, M.D.
President

Dear Congressman Boustany:

On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I write to express our gratitude to you for your amendments to H.R. 609, the “College Access and Opportunity Act of 2006,” which will ease the burden of debt for some residents in training programs longer than five years and study the factors influencing these young physicians’ residency choices. The AAMC represents the 125 accredited allopathic medical schools, nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, 109,000 faculty through 94 academic and scientific societies, and the nation’s medical students and resident physicians.

With medical education costs rising, medical students are looking to educational loans to fund a large portion of their expenses. Repayment of these loans poses a substantial financial hardship for aspiring physicians. As a thoracic surgeon, you are well aware that medical training programs can last much longer than the three currently covered under the Economic Hardship Deferment. Your amendment will allow residents with the longest of these training programs to obtain, as you stated, the “experience and adequate training to provide the latest and most effective care.” Passage of your amendment will help the next generation of our nation’s specialty physicians acquire these skills by easing the transition during their necessary, but lengthy, training.

The AAMC remains concerned about residents who must train for longer than three years who would not be aided by your amendment, and we are eager to work with you in the future to relieve the financial burden of all physicians in training and to ensure that medical education debt does not become insurmountable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jordan J. Cohen".

Jordan J. Cohen, M.D.