



**A resolution of the Duke University Graduate and Professional Student Council  
in condemnation of Section 1204 of H.R.1 of the 115<sup>th</sup> United States Congress:  
“Tax Cuts and Jobs Act”.**

**WHEREAS**, Graduate and professional education is necessary for sustaining and creating leaders in many fields, such as medicine, education, arts, engineering, business, and science; and

**WHEREAS**, Graduate and professional students are critical to academic endeavors and all associated industries as participants, instructors, researchers and inventors; and

**WHEREAS**, Many graduate and professional students cannot directly afford tuition for their programs, and approximately 153,000 graduate students received qualified tuition remissions in 2011<sup>1</sup>, defined as non-taxable income by U.S. Code § 117d; and

**WHEREAS**, Approximately 60% of students in higher education take out student loans to pay for education costs<sup>2</sup>, and benefit\* from Student Loan Interest Deductions (SLID) to help pay off these loans; and

**WHEREAS**, Section 1204 of H.R.1 – “Tax Cuts and Jobs Act” (115th Congress) would repeal U.S. Code § 117d and eliminate SLIDs, as well as remove other benefits currently utilized by graduate and professional students; and

**WHEREAS**, Were H.R.1 to become law, financial pressure on students would increase, prompting more to take out loans, while simultaneously removing benefits for those attempting to pay back said loans; and

**WHEREAS**, Were H.R.1 to become law, it would disproportionately incentivize students without personal wealth and those from low- and middle-income families not to pursue a graduate or professional degree; and

**WHEREAS**, The administration of Duke University also recognizes<sup>3</sup> the threat of this legislation to graduate education; and

**WHEREAS**, The solemn duty of GPSC, as is stated in ArII:S1 of its bylaws, is to: “represent and advocate on behalf of graduate and professional students at Duke University;”,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GPSC**, to officially condemn the inclusion of Section 1204 of H.R.1 in the proposed changes to the US Tax Code, and to advocate against any other changes to this tax code that disrupt or damage graduate education or the higher education system of the United States.

\*12 million taxpayers in 2014<sup>2</sup>

Authors: GPSC Advocacy Committee; Will Barclay (Director of Advocacy, Duke GPSC)

Movant: Jacqueline Robinson-Hamm

References:

1. "Talking Points: Section 117(d) Qualified Tuition Reduction." The American Council on Education, 2017, <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Talking-Points-Sec-117-d.pdf>
2. "Talking Points: Student Loan Interest Deduction & Tax Exclusion of Discharge of Student Loan Debt." The American Council on Education, 2017, <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Talking-Points-Student-Loan-Interest-Deduction-Tax-Exclusion.pdf>
3. (see attached correspondence from Vincent Price, President of Duke University)

# Duke and Tax Reform Legislation

President Vincent E. Price <president@duke.edu>

Tue 11/14/2017 3:47 PM

To: Faculty and Staff <> ;



Dear Duke Colleagues,

You may have heard that the tax plan currently being developed in Congress includes a number of controversial proposals targeting higher education. Duke strongly opposes these provisions, which include:

- Eliminating the deduction for interest in student loans
- Making graduate student tuition waivers count as taxable income
- Initiating an excise tax on university endowments that will reduce the amount of funding available for student assistance and faculty chairs
- Eliminating tax exemption for tuition assistance for employees and dependents
- Eliminating tax-exempt financing for construction projects
- Eliminating deductions for certain contributions to athletics programs

We believe these provisions directly threaten Duke students, employees, and their families. That's why we are working closely with other universities, national organizations and members of Congress to refocus the tax reform debate on simplification and incentives for education and research. This effort is being led by the university's Office of Public Affairs and Government Relations; you can learn more at <http://www.acenet.edu/Pages/Higher-Education-and-Tax-Reform.aspx>.

As Congress debates changes to the tax reform legislation, Duke will be working to protect our students, faculty, and staff, and the invaluable work that you do on our campus. We are thankful for your contribution to the university community, and we will continue to fight against legislative proposals that threaten our collective mission of knowledge in service to society.

Sincerely,

Vincent E. Price  
President