



Federal Bar Association
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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July 19, 2007

The Honorable Richard Durbin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: S. 442, Loan Repayment Assistance for Prosecutors and Public Defenders

Dear Senator Durbin:

On behalf of the Federal Bar Association and its sixteen thousand members, I write to express our strong support for efforts to include the John R. Justice Prosecutors and Defenders Incentive Act (S. 442) on the Higher Education Reconciliation bill (also known as the College Cost Reduction Act of 2007, H.R. 2669) currently before the Senate.

On June 25, I wrote to you to express the Federal Bar Association's endorsement of the John R. Justice Prosecutors and Defenders Incentive Act (S. 442), which would establish a student loan repayment program for those who agree to remain employed for at least three years as State or local criminal prosecutors and as State, local, or Federal public defenders. The measure complements loan forgiveness options that currently exist for Federal prosecutors and other attorneys employed by the Federal government, by establishing within the Department of Justice a program of student loan repayment assistance for borrowers who agree to remain employed for at least three years as State or local criminal prosecutors, or as State, local, or Federal public defenders in criminal cases. It would permit eligible attorneys to receive student loan debt repayments of up to \$10,000 per year, with a maximum aggregate over time of \$60,000.

This legislation deserves immediate action by the Senate because it relieves the staggering burden of student loan debt confronted by increasing numbers of law school graduates and provides ways to assure that dedicated and competent attorneys seek out employment opportunities in public defender and prosecutor offices. Many of the youngest members of our association who have entered the legal profession are burdened by significant debt encumbered to finance their legal education. It also will help to relieve the serious challenges faced by state prosecutor and public defender offices in recruiting and retaining qualified attorneys, as their offices' workload continues to grow.

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Attachment now of this important legislation to the Higher Education Reconciliation bill (also known as the College Cost Reduction Act of 2007, H.R. 2669) currently before the Senate will help to make prosecutor and public defender jobs at all levels of government more attractive and financially viable for law school graduates who have incurred significant educational debt, as well as provide a powerful incentive for attracting talented new lawyers to public service employment.

I thank you for your continued leadership on this issue and encourage the Senate to include the John R. Justice Prosecutors and Defenders Incentive Act (S. 442) on the Higher Education Reconciliation bill.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. N. LaForge", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William N. LaForge
National President