



AccessLex Institute Disagrees with White House's Vision for the Higher Education Act

WEST CHESTER, PA, March 20, 2019 — AccessLex Institute is alarmed by several proposals outlined in the White House's Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization principles released on Monday, as they would negatively impact access to higher education for large swaths of students across the country.

Right on the heels of a fiscal year 2020 [budget proposal](#) that would disincentivize public service and make advanced education more expensive, the White House is now [proposing](#) to cap federal loans for graduate students. Adopting these proposals would reduce access and complicate financial aid and repayment decisions for the very students HEA was created to serve.

AccessLex Institute urges both the House and the Senate education committees to craft an HEA reauthorization that ensures access to advanced education, particularly for historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students, and to make higher education more affordable for those graduate and professional students who perform public service.

In its "Proposals to Reform the Higher Education Act", the White House seeks to reduce the amount of loan funding available under the Grad PLUS loan program, eliminate the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program and increase monthly repayment amounts in income-driven payment plans. Lowering the cap on Grad PLUS loans will force many students to borrow from private lenders, returning the nation to an environment where many low- and middle-income individuals will be unable to obtain a student loan under reasonable terms, or even obtain a loan at all.

"Given the surfeit of underserved areas in our country where the scarcity of legal services attorneys impedes access to justice for far too many people, now is the time to make legal education more affordable and accessible, not less," said Christopher P. Chapman, President and Chief Executive Officer of AccessLex Institute. "And the shortage of vital services is not just an issue in the legal sector. It plays out in jobs across our economy that require advanced education, such as healthcare, education, and social work."

While AccessLex is encouraged to see the White House's proposals that would enhance financial aid counseling, require program-level data, and promote data-sharing among agencies to make applying for financial aid and enrolling in income-driven repayment plans easier for borrowers, Congress must prioritize policies that further the promise of access and affordability central to the Higher Education Act. AccessLex Institute stands ready to work with Congress and the President to craft policies that improve access to and the affordability of graduate and professional education.

See our guiding principles for Higher Education Act Reauthorization [here](#).

See our full set of Higher Education Act policy recommendations [here](#).