PRESERVE THE PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM

November 27, 2017

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor &
Pensions
U.S. Senate
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor &
Pensions
U.S. Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2262 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
1201 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Alexander, Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Patty Murray and Ranking Member Bobby Scott:

What do healthy animals, safe and nutritious food grown in the United States and global trade have in common? What do sheep and goats, salmon and seals, cows and catfish, horses and pigs, giraffes and lions, chickens and turkeys, tigers and bears have in common? The answer is highly educated and well-trained scientists including veterinarians, animal scientists, dairy scientists, equine scientists, poultry scientists, marine biologists, zoologists, animal nutritionists, epidemiologists, pathologists, ecologists, veterinary technicians and many others.

What these scientific professionals have in common, aside from a love of animals and a commitment to their vocations, is educational debt. After devoting years of their lives completing rigorous educational programs gaining requisite knowledge, skills and experience needed to fill demanding specialized jobs they are in debt.

For far too many graduates, student loan debt is a crippling barrier to pursuing fulfilling careers in public service that require a broad range of expertise across the scientific disciplines. These roles include key positions at state departments of agriculture, fish and game departments and many other state and federal government agencies across the United States. They include positions in academia to advance knowledge and train the next generation of scientists; to provide important extension services to ranchers and farmers; to develop and perfect new treatment methods, tests and vaccines; to surveil, combat, treat and ameliorate crippling and economically devastating animal diseases; to conduct diagnostic tests on pathogens; to ensure food safety and provide inspection services; to preserve habitat and wildlife conservation; to study and care for animals in zoos and aquariums; to treat animals in shelters; to advance science for the betterment of both animal and human health; to ensure a healthy environment for both humans and animals, and so much more.

These professionals are counting on the U.S. Congress to keep their promise to them when it established the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. They are, or will be, working full-time

in public sector positions for a minimum of ten years while repaying their student loans after which time the remaining qualified educational debt is forgiven.

Absent the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, a career in the public sector would be infeasible for many scientists. Put bluntly, the program strengthens America's workforce and is an essential tool in attracting veterinarians and other scientists to careers in the public sector. The continuation of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program will benefit our nation's public institutions, advance animal health and welfare, foster scientific developments, and help protect a healthy food supply. We respectfully urge you to preserve the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

On behalf of the 119 undersigned national and state organizations:
Alabama Veterinary Medical Association
Alaska State Veterinary Medical Association
American Animal Hospital Association
American Association of Avian Pathologists
American Association of Bovine Practitioners
American Association of Equine Practitioners
American Association of Feline Practitioners
American Association of Industry Veterinarians
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners
American Association of Veterinary Clinicians
American Association of Zoo Veterinarians
American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians
American Board of Veterinary Practitioners
American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine
American College of Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia
American College of Veterinary Behaviorists
American College of Veterinary Microbiologists
American College of Veterinary Surgeons
American Dairy Science Association
American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association
American Society of Laboratory Animal Practitioners
American Society for Microbiology
American Veterinary Epidemiology Society
American Veterinary Medical Association
Arizona Veterinary Medical Association
Arkansas Veterinary Medical Association
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Avian Veterinarians
Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine
Alaska State Veterinary Medical Association
California Veterinary Medical Association
Center for Animal Health in Appalachia
Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association
Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine
Delaware Veterinary Medical Association
District of Columbia Veterinary Medical Association
Federation of Animal Science Societies

Florida Veterinary Medical Association
Georgia Veterinary Medical Association
Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association
Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association
Indiana Veterinary Medical Association
Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine
Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine
Kansas Veterinary Medical Association
Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association
Lincoln Memorial University College of Veterinary Medicine
Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association
Maine Veterinary Medical Association
Maryland Veterinary Medical Association
Maryland Veterinary Medical Foundation
Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association
Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine
Michigan Veterinary Medical Association
Midwestern University College of Veterinary Medicine
Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association
Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine
Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association
Missouri Veterinary Medical Association
Montana Veterinary Medical Association
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals Multistate Initiative
National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials
National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science
National Association for Biomedical Research
National Association of Federal Veterinarians
National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians
National Institute for Animal Agriculture
Nebraska Veterinary Medical Association
Nevada Veterinary Medical Association
New Hampshire Veterinary Medical Association
New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association
New Mexico Veterinary Medical Association
New York State Veterinary Medical Society
North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine
North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association
Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine
Ohio Veterinary Medical Association
Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association
Oregon State University College of Veterinary Medicine
Oregon Veterinary Medical Association
Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association
Pennsylvania Veterinary Foundation
Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine
Rhode Island Veterinary Medical Association
Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine
Society for Theriogenology
South Carolina Association of Veterinarians
South Dakota Veterinary Medical Association

Student American Veterinary Medical Association
Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association
Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences
Texas Veterinary Medical Association
Texas Veterinary Medical Foundation
Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine
Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine
U.S. Animal Health Association
University of California-Davis School of Veterinary Medicine
University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Kentucky Department of Veterinary Science
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine
University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine
Utah Veterinary Medical Association
Vermont Veterinary Medical Association
Veterinary Business Management Association
Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine
Virginia Veterinary Medical Association
Washington State University
Washington State Veterinary Medical Association
West Virginia Veterinary Medical Association
Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association
Wyoming Veterinary Medical Association

cc: Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
    House Committee on Education and the Workforce