

Resident Education Deferred Interest Act (REDI) Act (S. 942 / H.R. 2028)

- ❖ Please urge your Senators and your Representative to cosponsor S. 942 / H.R. 2028, the Resident Education Deferred Interest (REDI) Act.
- ❖ S. 942 / H.R. 2028 would allow students in medical or dental internships or residency programs to defer their student loan payments until the completion of their programs.
- ❖ This legislation was introduced by Representatives Brian Babin (R-TX-36) and Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA-06) alongside Senators Jacky Rosen (D-NV) and John Boozman (R-AR).

Background

New dentists face staggering amounts of debt after graduation. Dental school tuition has nearly doubled since 2000, and 78% of dental school graduates now start their careers with over \$312,000 in student loan debt. The majority of dental students use federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loans and Grad PLUS Loans, which can have interest rates as high as 10.5%.

As interest accrues during their dental education, students face tens of thousands of dollars in additional debt. Medical and dental students should be afforded the same repayment deferral policy as undergraduate and graduate students, who are allowed to postpone loan payments until after graduation.

The unprecedented burden of student loans can deter students from pursuing a career in dentistry, exacerbating the current dental workforce shortage. According to the Health Resources and Services Administration, 58 million Americans live in a dental health workforce shortage area, with rural communities being disproportionately affected. The staggering financial burden of dental school loans also exacerbates workforce burnout, with a 2021 survey finding that 58% of dentists reporting that they experience feelings of burnout multiple times a week.

S. 942 / H.R. 2028, Resident Deferred Interest Act (REDI) Act

The REDI Act would allow medical and dental students to defer payments on their federal student loans, interest-free, until the completion of their medical or dental residency. It would also prevent federal student loan interest from accumulating until the completion of their program.

S. 942 / H.R. 2028 would address the shortage of dental health providers by making medical and dental education more affordable. By deferring loan interest during residency, it removes financial barriers and supports healthcare providers in underserved rural areas. This bill would help offset the staggering amounts of debt faced by new dentists at graduation and improve access to quality dental care for Americans.

Who is the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD)?

Founded in 1952, the AGD has over 40,000 members from across the United States and is the only professional association that exclusively represents the needs and interests of general dentists. As the country's second-largest dental association, AGD works to promote oral health to the public and foster general dentists' continued proficiency through quality continuing education.

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