

Sponsor(s):

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WHEREAS The University of California's mission is to serve society as a center of higher learning; and,

WHEREAS, the affordability of higher education is paramount to the University's ability to attract and retain students and to ensure access to higher education regardless of income or wealth; and,

WHEREAS The current tax code helps reduce the cost of college not only because a college education benefits individuals, but because it benefits society at large¹; and,

WHEREAS On November 3rd, 2017, the Republicans on the United States House of Representatives published a proposal to reshape the United States tax system, entitled the "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act;" and,

WHEREAS this tax plan includes many changes related to higher education that negatively affect current, former, and future students;² and,

WHEREAS It is expected that the Congress will push the passage of this bill in an expedited manner, with some reports suggesting this to occur as early as Thanksgiving;³ and,

WHEREAS While there still remains a need for a full analysis of this bill, preliminary reports suggest the following to be a part of the plan:²

1. Elimination of 10% tax bracket (up to 12%).
2. Elimination of tax code section 117d, which would allow tuition waivers to count as taxable income (which would mean PhD students/ TAs with tuition waivers would owe an additional 12% of 16,000 in tuition/ fees that we never actually receive.
3. Elimination of tax code section 127 that allows for tax free employer paid education assistance, upon which many graduate students rely to fund their education
4. Elimination of lifetime learning credit (LLC).
5. Elimination of FICA tax credit, which would cause graduate students to pay an additional \$600 (approx.) in taxes.
6. Elimination of the tax credit programs that previously allowed International students who paid into social security to have that money refunded to them; and,

¹ <http://www.chronicle.com/article/Republican-Tax-Proposal-Gets/241662>

² Student Advocate for Graduate Education (SAGE), "Graduate Students & The 'Tax Cuts and Jobs Act': What You Need to Know," 2017: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxY3RsnbL2xHNmpySjAxWlpZUGs/view>

³ Ibid.

WHEREAS these measures run the risk of making the pursuit of higher education financially untenable or unduly burdensome, particularly for vulnerable populations who rely upon current tax structures and credits in order to live; and,

WHEREAS these elements in the bill will be potentially deleterious to undergraduate, graduate and professional students and their families; and,

WHEREAS these changes would devastate the University's ability to attract students, would severely limit access to higher education for those without the ability to pay for this additional tax burden, and would cause disruption to higher education and science production throughout the nation;

WHEREAS UCSA and the respective UC student governments support workers and low-income individuals and families, all of whom would be negatively impacted by this proposed tax bill and, specifically, these measures relevant to higher education;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The UCSA Board of Directors directs the UCSA Government Relations Director to perform a legislative analysis (or find a trusted analysis) that assesses the average tax burden that the new bill will add to students of various groups and identifies the aspects of the bill that negatively impact students; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, we urge the external offices of the University of California's respective student governments to immediately direct their attention to the implications of this tax plan on current and future students and to pursue all reasonable avenues for opposing these identified aspects;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The UCSA Board of Directors calls on the University of California to oppose these aspects of the tax plan, and to put their national advocacy resources into calling on members of congress to remove these changes and, in the meantime, to reassess its tuition remission structures as a safeguard against the relevant proposed tax changes now and in the future; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the UCSA Board of Directors will attempt to solicit support from UC Office of the President in lobbying legislators against these elements in the proposed tax bill; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The UCSA Board of Directors authorizes the Government Relations committee to direct their attention to the implications of this tax plan on current and future students and to pursue all reasonable avenues for opposing these aspects; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The UCSA Board of Directors authorizes the UCSA Campus Action Committee to discuss potential actions they may choose to organize as a means of educating and combating against these dangerous measures; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The UCSA Board of Directors directs the UCSA President to incorporate messaging into the address of the UC Regents at the upcoming November meeting of the UC Regents to include this stance in opposition to the proposed tax bill, and to include educational information on this issue in its StARS packet for the November 2017 UC Regents meeting.