



November 8, 2017

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur  
United States House of Representatives  
2186 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act

Dear Representative Kaptur:

While I appreciate that reforming the tax code is necessary, I write to express my concern with several provisions in the current version of H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act which could have a lasting impact on access to the University of Toledo (UT) and the affordability of attaining a degree in higher education. I am very concerned that adoption of these provisions could have the unintended consequence of hindering our efforts to develop the highly skilled workforce needed to advance the economies in Northwest Ohio.

Specifically, I note the following provisions:

The legislation as introduced would tax students on tuition waivers that colleges and universities provide. Today, 31.9% of UT's students are first generation college students, we need to find ways to assist our students in degree attainment, not tax them for achieving scholastically to earn tuition reductions. This tax on students would affect over 3,000 graduate students across the university by significantly increasing their out-of-pocket costs and could significantly harm our ability to perform research in areas such as water quality in Lake Erie, advanced technologies such as thin-film photovoltaics, and medical research.

The proposed legislation would also tax students on employer-provided education assistance, which has proven highly effective at encouraging the private sector to invest in their employees' educational advancement. Employer-provided assistance offers help for graduate and undergraduate students and is an important tool to help our student attend and afford college. According to the 2014 U.S. Census Bureau, only 28.68% of Ohioans have a bachelor's degree or higher. For our state to be competitive, we need to work together to find ways to offer affordable access to a college education.

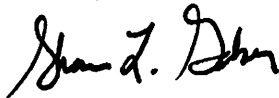
The legislation would also propose to eliminate the charitable deduction for donations that grant the right to purchase tickets for athletic events. UT has many donors who make gifts for suites/loge/club/courtside seating and premium football/basketball seating rights. We have always set these up with a contribution portion and a separate ticket cost portion. If the donors can no longer deduct these amounts, I am concerned that UT may lose these supporters. UT relies heavily on premium seat/ticket sales and the related contributions to provide funding to support scholarships for almost 400 student athletes. Only a handful of collegiate athletic programs across the nation are self-supporting. The majority, including UT, rely on support from the institution to operate successfully.

Finally, the legislation's proposed expansion of the standard deduction could have serious implications for charitable giving for the UT as it reduces the number of individuals benefitting from the charitable deduction. At UT, gifts typically range from \$25 to \$5,000 annually. Doubling the standards deduction could significantly reduce the number of donors who will continue to itemize deductions. I am concerned that, if a donor can no longer itemize, there is a chance they may not make a gift.

Higher education has proven its value to society – developing the workforce for the jobs today and tomorrow. I respectfully request that you consider the impact of the legislation on the University of Toledo and our students as you deliberate on the tax bill.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon L. Gaber". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S".

Sharon L. Gaber, Ph.D.  
President