

# AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Organized 1884

Incorporated by the Congress 1889

August 18, 2014

## **The AHA Supports Durbin Bill to Expand Student Loan Forgiveness Program to Adjunct Professors**

The American Historical Association strongly endorses the [legislation](#) introduced by US Senator Dick Durbin that would allow adjunct faculty members at institutions of higher education to qualify-- like other public servants--for federal student loan forgiveness.

As is widely known, the structure of faculty employment in US colleges and universities has been changing rapidly and in an adverse direction over the past several decades. As a consequence of the shrinking budgets of institutions of higher education, and the creation of new models of instruction at some institutions (especially in the for-profit sector) the number of part-time faculty positions continues to increase while the number of tenure-track positions has fallen to all-time lows. American higher education now relies on the adjunct faculty who have assumed these part-time positions. Most of these hard-working scholars hold advanced degrees and thus bear a heavy burden of student loan debt. At the same time, they not only have minimal job security but receive low pay and few if any employee benefits.

Adjunct faculty are fully public servants. They do work that is essential to the healthy development of our society and economy, and typically earn much less than others with similar levels of skill and preparation. They deserve to benefit from the federal program begun in 1965 that provides student loan forgiveness for other categories of public servants such as full-time educators, nurses, public health workers, and members of the military. The role of adjunct faculty in maintaining American higher education in the early 21st century should be publicly recognized, even as we lament the conditions under which most are working. We strongly urge members of Congress to turn the [Durbin](#) bill into law.