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NASBA Responds to Federal Reclassification of Accounting Degrees as "Non-Professional"

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (Nov. 25, 2025) — The National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) strongly opposes the U.S. Department of Education's implementation of new student-loan policies that reclassify accounting degrees as "non-professional."

"Classifying accountants as anything other than professionals fundamentally misrepresents the critical work CPAs perform, work that is responsible for the integrity of the global financial systems on which businesses and individuals rely," said NASBA President and CEO Daniel J. Dustin, CPA. "There's a reason certified public accountancy has been a licensed profession in the United States since 1896."

The Department of Education change affects federal loan caps under the new Repayment Assistance Plan (RAP) that, beginning in July 2026, will reduce borrowing limits for accounting students to $20,500 per year, compared to $50,000 per year for degrees the Department now labels "professional." A reduction in loan access may deter a broad range of students from entering the CPA profession at a time when the complexity of markets and businesses require a robust and educated workforce. NASBA maintains that federal policy must accurately reflect the realities of professional CPA licensure, as economic stability and protection of the public depend on a strong and well-regulated accounting profession.

This reclassification also departs sharply from established federal and state definitions, and excludes many other long-recognized licensed professions, including those responsible for public health and safety, such as nursing, architecture, education, and engineering.

NASBA will consult with the 55 U.S. accounting jurisdictions it represents—that license the more than 653,000 CPAs in the United States—and will engage policymakers to ensure accounting is restored to the professional degree category.

NASBA stands ready to work collaboratively with policymakers to address this issue and to support solutions that strengthen the profession and protect the public.

About NASBA
Since 1908, the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) has served as a forum for the nation's Boards of Accountancy, which administer the Uniform CPA Examination, license approximately 653,000 certified public accountants and regulate the practice of public accountancy in the United States.

NASBA's mission is to enhance the effectiveness and advance the common interests of the Boards of Accountancy in meeting their regulatory responsibilities. The Association promotes the exchange of information among accountancy boards, serving the needs of the 55 U.S. jurisdictions.

NASBA is headquartered in Nashville, TN, with operations in San Juan, PR. To learn more about NASBA, visit www.nasba.org.

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