



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 20, 2007

CONTACT: Deanne Loonin
617/542-8010
Edie Irons
510/883-7302

Help for Struggling Student Loan Borrowers

New Web Site from National Consumer Law Center and the Project on Student Debt

Boston, MA: As their six-month grace period draws to a close, the Class of 2007 is about to begin paying off their student loans. If they run into trouble repaying those loans, borrowers don't have a lot of options, and until now, finding out about even those limited options has been surprisingly difficult. A new web site, Student Loan Borrower Assistance (www.studentloanborrowerassistance.org), will help address this problem. The site includes information on repayment options, avoiding and getting out of default, dealing with collections agencies, and much more.

"So many borrowers I talk to can't find critical information to address their problems," said Deanne Loonin, a staff attorney at the National Consumer Law Center, and author of the web site. "This site describes the rights and obligations of student borrowers in plain language, so that they can understand their options, and stand up for themselves."

More than 5 million people take out student loans every year. The average borrower graduates with almost \$20,000 in student loans, and the Project on Student Debt found that student debt levels grew eight percent between 2005 and 2006, while starting salaries rose by only four percent. People who experience unexpected financial challenges – such as unemployment, expensive health problems or divorce – can quickly find themselves struggling to pay off their student loans and possibly even defaulting.

Student Loan Borrower Assistance is the first and only independent resource that provides advice and objective information for borrowers, their families, and legal advocates. The site features straightforward information about everything from choosing a student loan to getting out of default and dealing with aggressive collection agencies. It also includes policy briefs, legal case studies, sample documents and promissory notes, and other valuable resources not found elsewhere on the web.

"This is a major breakthrough for hundreds of thousands of borrowers who struggle with their loans," said Robert Shireman, Executive Director of the Project on Student Debt, which funded the development of the site. "Before, they often had nowhere to turn for help, but we're beginning to change that – this is the first step."

#

The National Consumer Law Center (NCLC) is the nation's consumer law expert, helping consumers, their advocates, and public policy makers use powerful and complex consumer laws on behalf of low-income and vulnerable Americans seeking economic justice. For more information, visit www.nclc.org.

The Project on Student Debt is managed by The Institute for College Access & Success, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to expanding educational opportunity. For more information, see www.projectonstudentdebt.org.