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New Poll Shows Substantial, Bipartisan Support For Student Loan Forgiveness And Other Relief For Borrowers



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I'm an attorney focused on helping student loan borrowers.

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A [new poll](#) released today by Student Defense, the Defend Students Action Fund, and Data for Progress indicates there is substantial, bipartisan support for student loan relief programs and widespread student loan forgiveness.

Here are some highlights:

- 65% of likely voters in the poll support the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, which forgives qualifying federal student loans for borrowers employed by nonprofit and government organizations after 10 years of qualifying payments. The program has been riddled with problems, and President Trump and congressional Republicans previously have [threatened to repeal it](#).
- 67% of respondents, including 58% of Republicans.

support some form of widespread student loan forgiveness — whether it is universal, tied to income, or based on specific program eligibility. Only 26% of respondents said student loan debt should not be forgiven.

- 78% of likely voters, and 80% of Republicans, support holding the owners and executives of predatory for-profit colleges personally liable for fraudulent behavior that harms student loan borrowers. The Trump administration is currently battling multiple lawsuits brought by student loan borrowers regarding the troubled Borrower Defense to Repayment program, which was designed to provide student loan forgiveness for borrowers defrauded by their schools.
- 78% support requiring for-profit colleges to show graduating students earn enough to pay back their loans. In September, a federal court ruled that a lawsuit challenging the Department of Education’s repeal of the “Gainful Employment” rule [can proceed](#). The rule, which was established by the Obama administration to require colleges to certify that their degree and certificate programs adequately prepare students for decent-paying jobs after graduation, was repealed by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos in 2019.
- 69% of respondents agree that students attending schools that close — so that they can't complete their studies — should have their loans discharged.
- 33% of voters think that for-profit schools shouldn't get federal funds at all. Another 26% think that for-profit colleges, to qualify for federal funds, should have to prove their graduates are earning enough to repay their loans.

“These results make clear that people recognize the urgency of fixing higher education, of ensuring that no more students are trapped in debt for worthless degrees, and that we do not condemn another generation to poverty and discrimination,” said Student Defense President Aaron Ament. “The Secretary of Education has the power to make tremendous strides in addressing these vital needs, and Student Defense is working to give the Department what it needs to take action right away.”

The same poll [also shows](#) former Vice President Joe Biden leading Donald Trump among likely voters in swing states. 17-

44%, with 9 percent undecided.

Biden, who had initially been hesitant to endorse broad cancellation of student loan debt, has embraced more dramatic steps to alleviate the burden of student loan debt in the wake of the pandemic and recent racial justice protests. Under his plan, Biden would forgive all undergraduate federal student loan debt for borrowers with annual incomes under \$125,000 who attended public colleges and universities, as well as historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and private minority-serving institutions (MSIs). Biden also supports \$10,000 in across-the-board student loan forgiveness for all borrowers as an economic stimulus in response to the recession. He has also [expressed support for Senator Warren's proposal to amend the bankruptcy code](#) to allow student loan debt to be more easily discharged in bankruptcy.

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[Don't Get Excited About Joe Biden Cancelling Student Loan Debt Just Yet](#)

By [Kelly Anne Smith](#) Forbes Staff



[What Joe Biden's Presidency Could Mean For Your Student Loans](#)

By [Kelly Anne Smith](#) Forbes Staff



Biden also supports debt-free college initiatives for community colleges and public universities that are similar to plans previously offered by Senator Bernie Sanders (D-VT) and Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA). He has also supported cracking down on the for-profit college industry and strengthening the relief available to borrowers harmed by these schools. His running mate, Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA), has also been a critic of for-profit colleges, and she helped [take down a predatory national for-profit college chain](#) while she was Attorney General of California.

Last week, Senator Warren and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) introduced a Senate resolution calling on the next President to exercise executive authority to bypass Congress and cancel \$50,000 in student loan debt for all borrowers. The Biden campaign has not formally responded to the resolution, but he has [reportedly indicated](#) that, if elected, he could exercise his executive authority.

Further Reading

[Would Biden Enact Broad Student Loan Forgiveness? These](#)

[Advocates Say Yes](#)

[How "Cancel Student Debt" Went From A Fringe Idea To Mainstream](#)

[Elizabeth Warren And Chuck Schumer: The Next President Must Cancel Student Debt Without Congress](#)

[Dept. Of Education Tells Court It Has Denied 94% Of Loan Forgiveness Applications](#)

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