

# THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MISSOURI



ELECTION 2016  
GENERATION **PROGRESS**  
ACTION

Missouri students are facing a student debt crisis much like their counterparts in other states—students who graduated from public colleges in Missouri had [more debt on average](#) than those who graduated from private college. Public university tuition in the state increased 12 percent between 2005-2006 and 2015-2016, while higher education funding per student has decreased by 26.1 percent over the past five years.

Borrowers in Missouri are in crisis, and yet, there couldn't be a sharper contrast between the candidates on policies that would help borrowers and address college affordability. Young people are eager to see solutions to the student debt crisis, and we know that policies like debt-free college and student loan refinancing [would help young people especially](#).

We know that student debt affects 1 in 5 households in the United States, but let's see how it affects Missourians:

- **910,000** Missourians [have student debt](#)
- The [combined total student debt load](#) in Missouri is **\$24,077,389,000**
- Borrowers in Missouri have, [on average](#), **\$28,141** in student loans
- **59 percent** of four-year college students in Missouri [have student loans](#)
- **523,000** students in Missouri [would benefit](#) from student loan refinancing

Nationally, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has yet to produce any sort of comprehensive plan to deal with the student debt crisis. From what we can infer from his contradictory public statements, however, any version of a Donald Trump "plan" to address student debt would skyrocket interest rates for borrowers. By privatizing student loans, Trump's "plan" [could increase monthly payments](#) for Missouri borrowers by anywhere between 23.4 and 78 percent, costing them between \$7,540 and \$25,131 over the life of their loans.

In the Missouri Senate race, incumbent Senator Roy Blunt (R) has done nothing to address the student debt crisis in his state, despite rising tuition and funding cuts. Senator Blunt has blocked efforts like student loan refinancing that would help borrowers struggling with their loans, and has not supported proposals that would fund black and Hispanic-serving institutions. Moreover, Senator Blunt has taken campaign contributions

## MISSOURI IS....

- **20.8%** people of color (1)
- **3.3%** LGBTQ people (2)
- **50.9%** women (3)
- **0.7%** incarcerated people (4)
- **15.7%** seniors (5)
- **7%** college or graduate students (6)
- **7.7%** veterans (7)

Missouri [has a policy](#) where only DACA beneficiaries qualify for in-state tuition at some colleges and universities.

**Donald Trump's  
higher education  
"plan" could cost**

**MISSOURI STUDENTS**

**an extra  
\$25,131**

from predatory for-profit colleges that target veterans, single parents, and the elderly and are under investigation by multiple federal agencies.

The contrast with Senate candidate Jason Kander (D) couldn't be clearer. He has campaigned on a platform to make college affordable for all and wants to help borrowers by lowering federal loan interest rates.

Missouri needs a plan to not only help student loan borrowers in the state, but make higher education a public good again for all Missourians, present and future.

### Jason Kander (D) wants to:

- Allow borrowers to **refinance their student loans**
- Place a cap on **federal student loan interest rates**, keeping rates low for borrowers
- Expand the **Pell grant program**
- Create **standards for for-profit colleges** to ensure graduates are prepared for gainful employment, and that fraudulent recruitment and financial practices do not devalue a student's degree
- Provide **additional support** for Historically Black Colleges and Universities

### As senator, Roy Blunt (R):

- Has voted repeatedly against bills allowing loan refinancing
- Opposed **limiting federal loan interest rates**
- Took **\$28,800 in political contributions from for-profit educational institutions**, ranking 5<sup>th</sup> highest among all his congressional colleagues who took similar contributions