

THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN PENNSYLVANIA



ELECTION 2016
GENERATION **PROGRESS**
ACTION

Pennsylvania is one of the five worst states when it comes to amount of student debt per borrower, and its two largest public universities are the costliest public universities in the nation. Public four-year college graduates in Pennsylvania have about the [same amount of debt](#) and are more likely to have debt than private college graduates.

New numbers available through the College Scorecard show that among Pennsylvania borrowers entering repayment, the percentage defaulted or not able to repay their loans jumped from 20 percent to 28 percent between 2006 and 2011.¹ During that time, tuition at state universities increased significantly, while [state investment in higher education decreased](#).

Borrowers in Pennsylvania 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 Pennsylvanians:

- **2,082,000** Pennsylvanians [have student debt](#)
- The combined [total student debt load](#) in Pennsylvania is **\$53,303,909,000**
- Borrowers in Pennsylvania have, [on average](#), **\$28,592** in student loans
- **70 percent** of four-year college students in Pennsylvania [have student loans](#)
- **1,223,000** students in Pennsylvania would [benefit from student loan refinancing](#)

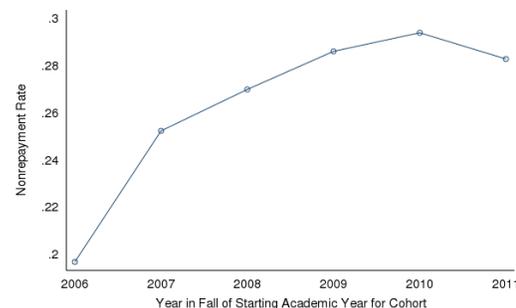
Nationally, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has yet to produce any sort of comprehensive plan to deal with the student debt crisis. From what we can infer from his contradictory public statements, however, any version of a Donald Trump "plan" to address student debt would skyrocket interest rates for borrowers. By privatizing student loans, Trump's "plan" could [increase monthly payments](#) for Pennsylvania borrowers by anywhere between 23.4 and 78 percent, costing them between \$7,200 and \$24,000 over the life of their loans.

PENNSYLVANIA IS....

- **24.3%** people of color (1)
- **2.7%** LGBTQ people (2)
- **51.1%** women (3)
- **0.8%** incarcerated people (4)
- **17.0%** seniors (5)
- **6.7%** college or graduate students (6)
- **7.1%** veterans (7)

Pennsylvania has no law ensuring the accessibility of higher education for undocumented students.

Since 2006, fewer students in Pennsylvania are repaying their loans.



In the Pennsylvania Senate race, incumbent Senator Pat Toomey (R) has done nothing to address the student debt crisis in his state, despite Pennsylvania's dubious honor of having the country's most expensive higher education system. Senator Toomey has blocked efforts like student loan refinancing that would help borrowers struggling with their loans, and has voted for budgets that slash programs like Pell grants that make college more affordable. Moreover, Senator Toomey has taken campaign contributions 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 Kate McGinty (D) couldn't be clearer. She has campaigned on a platform to make college debt-free and wants to help borrowers by lowering federal loan interest rates.

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

**Donald Trump's
higher education
"plan" could cost
PENNSYLVANIA STUDENTS
an extra
\$24,001**

Kate McGinty (D) wants to...

- Make college **debt-free** for middle class students
- **Protect Pell grants** for the 262,000 Pennsylvanians who used them to pay for college
- Allow current borrowers to **refinance their students loans** to take advantage of low interest rates
- **Cut interest rates** on student loans to help future borrowers
- Make sure the federal government **isn't making a profit** off of student loans
- Protect Pennsylvanians from **predatory for-profit institutions**

As senator, Pat Toomey (R) has...

- Voted in favor of budgets that **slashed Pell grants** for needy students
- Voted **against student loan refinancing**—three times
- **Supported for-profit colleges**, having previously served on the board and invested his own personal money [into Yorktown University](#), a for-profit college

¹ Author's analysis for the proportion [students entering repayment](#) in 2006 and 2011 who have defaulted or not paid down at least \$1 of the principal loan balance three years after repayment began.