

# THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NEVADA



ELECTION 2016  
GENERATION PROGRESS  
ACTION

Nevada students are facing an uphill climb. Public university tuition in the state increased 81 percent between 2005-2006 and 2015-2016, nearly [four times the rate of inflation](#). At public four-year colleges in Nevada, only 14.9 percent of students [graduated within four years](#), while 45.8 percent graduated within six years, forcing the vast majority of Nevada students to add multiple additional years of schooling to their student debt loads.

New numbers available through the College Scorecard show that among Nevada borrowers entering repayment, the percentage defaulted or not able to repay their loans jumped from 30 percent to 39 percent between 2006 and 2011.<sup>1</sup> During that time, tuition at state universities increased significantly, while [state investment in higher education decreased](#).

Borrowers in Nevada 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 Nevadans:

- **293,000** Nevadans [have student debt](#)
- The [combined total student debt load](#) in Nevada is **\$7,291,659,000**
- Borrowers in Nevada have, [on average](#), **\$26,337** in student loans
- **46 percent** of four-year college students in Nevada [have student loans](#)
- **293,000** students in Nevada [would benefit](#) from student loan refinancing

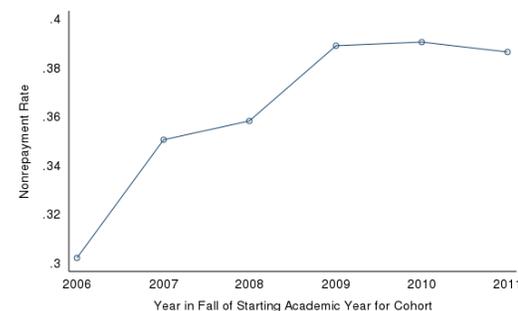
Nationally, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has yet to produce any sort of comprehensive plan to deal with the student debt crisis. From what we can infer from his contradictory public statements, however, any version of a Donald Trump "plan" to address student debt would skyrocket interest rates for borrowers. By privatizing student loans, Trump's "plan" [could increase monthly payments](#) for Nevada borrowers by anywhere between 23.4 and 78 percent, costing them between \$6,992 and \$23,305 over the life of their loans.

## NEVADA IS....

- **52.4%** people of color (1)
- **4.2%** LGBTQ people (2)
- **49.8%** women (3)
- **0.7%** incarcerated people (4)
- **14.6%** seniors (5)
- **5.9%** college or graduate students (6)
- **7.8%** veterans (7)

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

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



While in the U.S. House of Representatives, Joe Heck (R) has done nothing to address the student debt crisis in his state, despite rising tuition costs and funding cuts. Representative Heck has voted to slash programs like Pell grants that make college more affordable and even voted to eliminate funding for some federal student loans. Moreover, Representative Heck has supported predatory for-profit colleges that target veterans, single parents, and the elderly and are under investigation by multiple federal agencies.

The contrast with Nevada Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto (D) couldn't be clearer. She has campaigned on a platform to make college affordable for all Nevadans and wants to help borrowers by allowing them to refinance their student loans to take advantage of low interest rates.

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

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

**NEVADA STUDENTS**  
an extra  
**\$23,305**

### **Nevada Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto (D) wants to:**

- Allow student loan borrowers to **refinance their loans** to take advantage of low interest rates
- Preserve the Department of Education and **make college more affordable**, including advocating for increases to scholarship programs like Nevada's Millennium Scholarship
- Continue her legacy of **cracking down on the predatory practices of for-profit colleges**, which target veterans and vulnerable students

### **As a Representative, Joe Heck (R) has:**

- Voted to **cut funding for Pell grants** for 35,000 Nevada students
- Supported predatory for-profit colleges, including voting in favor of a bill that would have **lowered minimum standards** for them
- Voted to **eliminate funding for some federal student loans**, which traditionally offer student loan borrowers lower interest rates than private loans

<sup>1</sup> 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.