

Student Name

Teacher Name

Class Name

Date

### The Right To Education

Not everyone goes to college after they finish high school. Many people choose to go straight to the workplace instead. Is this because they prefer to do that or because college has become so expensive that it no longer seems affordable to them? Taking away the financial obstacle would allow everyone to continue their educations and continue preparing for higher paying careers. Because everyone deserves the opportunity to achieve higher education, the U.S. should make college education free for everyone.

To fully comprehend the problem, it is necessary to understand that college was not always overly expensive to attend. In the mid twentieth century, college in the U.S. was not only affordable, but it was also a good investment for young people to make for their futures. At that time, it was affordable for students because the state governments paid a lot of money to universities, which made tuitions lower, and the federal government paid money to students in the form of grants and low-cost loans. However, just as “borrowing to pay for college took off,” public support of colleges decreased (Sanchez). This began a cycle in which the federal government helped students pay for college, and the schools increased tuition because they knew students would just borrow more money to pay for it. Some of the money was used to pay professors higher incomes, but most of it was to pay for more administrative positions. To make matters

worse, many of those administrators earn six-figure salaries as of 2015 (Jaschick). This combination of factors led to a situation that makes higher education too big of a burden for many low and middle class students.

The first reason that colleges should not be making a profit off of students is that low and middle class students are the ones whose lives can be most greatly impacted by higher education. First, education has always been for the benefit of youths and has fostered them in their growth. For over 200 years, teachers in the U.S. have had a reputation as hard-working people dedicated to helping students learn and succeed. The debate over the purpose of a college education is old and can be summarized as being either to prepare students for the workforce or to give them “social, academic, cultural and intellectual development” (Strauss). Despite the debate, college has always been about benefitting the students. Also, for colleges to make profits off of students, who are only trying to create opportunity for themselves, is abusive. The chief bookstore administrator should not be making a six-figure salary while students are left with \$100,000 in debt after four years of college (Jaschick). Furthermore, if administrators want to earn large salaries, they should not be going into education. They should look for jobs in business fields such as finance. Regardless, universities should be far from profiting off of students.

Instead, American universities should provide free education because a more educated public will improve the country overall. The most obvious improvement will be in salaries because more people will get higher-education degrees and, therefore, get higher-paying careers. Anyone would be able to become a doctor or engineer and earn a large salary without having to pay off debt for twenty years. In addition, free college

education for everyone would raise the intelligence of the society as a whole. It's a logical conclusion that more educated citizens would make wiser decisions for their families and their well-being. For example, some studies have shown that college graduates are more politically and civically active and may be less inclined to smoke or drink alcohol (Nie). If a large part of the population shared these positive habits, society would benefit. Finally, crime will be reduced if more of the population pursues higher education. David J. Deming studied the effects of education on middle and high school students. Deming found that "teaching skills that increase students' ability to find employment" allows them to stay "in school longer, delaying the onset of criminality through the peak period of offending behaviors." The same result is true for college students. If they have a chance to continue gaining skills that will make them more employable, they will choose work instead of crime. Proof of this can be seen in some European countries that offer free education to all citizens.

Opponents will say that free college education is too expensive and that tax payers will be hurt when taxes go up to pay for this free benefit. However, the numbers tell a different story. Right now the U.S. government spends \$69 billion dollars on student aid, but the cost of tuition-free college could cost less than \$63 billion dollars (Eskow). There would probably be some other expenses involved with implementing free college, but the argument that it would be too expensive cannot be supported. Any additional expense would also be for a worthy cause of helping lower-income people to move up socially.

While the U.S.'s cost of college education has been going up for decades, many European countries have been offering free college for all of their citizens. Danish

students don't pay any tuition and live in one of the safest countries in the world. In Denmark, there is little crime, and violent crimes "occur less frequently than in the U.S" (Melnick). Sweden also has free college for its citizens. Sweden is a safe country that offers lots of support for families, and even though its college students have debt when they graduate from college, it does not compare to that of American students. Matt Phillips explains that because college graduates in Sweden only spend about 3.8% of their average monthly income paying back their debt, the system is "financially manageable" and helps students become "viable adults separate from their parents." In addition, Germany has free education for its college students as well as for international students. However, Germany's system is a little different; it is paid for by private companies, who hire students to work, and then pay for their classes (Strasser). This allows students to form relations with a company and start learning useful job-related skills while still in college. The U.S. should follow the example of these countries and adopt free education for everyone.

Finally, education in the U.S. should be free for everyone because it should be a right for all people regardless of income level. Citizens of all countries have been fighting for equal rights since the beginning of humanity. There was a time when women could not attend college, and college only became a realistic opportunity for middle and low income Americans after WW II. Also, the U.S. has been revolutionary before and needs to be so again. Getting healthcare for all of its citizens was a difficult battle, but that became a reality a few years ago. Just as everyone has the right to affordable healthcare, every citizen has the right to be educated. Furthermore, this right should not belong only to the rich. Dividing knowledge among social classes just makes the classes further apart and

prevents upward mobility for improving one's life. Richard Eskow explains that free college education "is essential to realizing" the American dream of participating "fully in all aspects of democratic life." It is time for the American government to be revolutionary again and bring this right to all citizens.

To conclude, there has been inequality in education between social classes because the cost of college is too expensive. The government is part of the reason it has become expensive and should, therefore, correct the problem by creating free education for anyone who wants to go to college in the U.S. This is the right thing to do.

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