



# **Durbin, Duckworth Join Colleagues To Introduce Resolution Asking President To Cancel Up To \$50,000 In Federal Loan Debt**

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WASHINGTON - United States Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) joined U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (D-MA-07) today to reintroduce their bicameral resolution outlining a bold plan for President Biden to tackle the student loan debt crisis by using existing authority under the Higher Education Act to cancel up to \$50,000 in student loan debt for Federal student loan borrowers. The resolution calls on the President to use executive authority to cancel student loan debt and ensure there is no tax liability for Federal student loan borrowers resulting from administrative debt cancellation.

“The \$1.6 trillion of federal student loan debt weighs down American families and disproportionately burdens Black and Latinx households,” said Durbin. “Cancelling up to \$50,000 in debt would provide immediate financial relief during this unprecedented economic crisis and lift the weight off the backs of countless American households. I am proud to join this resolution, which will help narrow the racial wealth gap and give millions a fresh start as we continue to grapple with this pandemic.”

“We told America's students that if they sought higher education, they'd receive better opportunities. But now, over 43 million of them, including seniors and students of color, are struggling to keep up with student debt payments on top of housing costs and other bills during this unprecedented public health and economic crisis,” said Duckworth. “By taking executive action and cancelling up to \$50,000 of federal student loan debt, President Biden can ease that burden and provide immediate, desperately-needed economic relief-and I hope he does.”

“Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of people across this country were confronting a student debt burden that made it harder to pay their bills, buy homes, pursue jobs in public service, and participate in any type of future economic recovery. And that burden has a particularly pernicious impact on communities of color. Nearly a year into this public health crisis and ensuing recession, families continue to struggle to afford basic necessities. But the new administration and Congress has made clear they are working to tackle these challenges and put decency, competency and the needs of working people first. Through the Higher Education Act, the president already has the tools he needs to meaningfully address the student debt crisis and forgive a portion of our nation's student debt. On behalf of millions of borrowers, educators, healthcare professionals and public employees, I am proud to support the senators and representatives introducing this important resolution that calls on the president to take that action and work to provide relief for struggling borrowers,” said Randi Weingarten, President of American Federation of Teachers

Today, over [43 million people](#) in the United States are buried under [\\$1.6 trillion](#) in federal student loan debt. Studies show that cancelling student debt would substantially [increase Black and Latinx household wealth and help narrow the racial wealth gap](#), provide immediate relief to millions of Americans during the pandemic and recession, and provide massive consumer-driven stimulus to our economy.

Over [325 civil rights, climate, health, labor, consumer rights, and student organizations have called on President Biden](#) to cancel federal student debt using executive action, including American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association, The Education Trust, Hispanic Federation, NAACP, National Urban League, UnidosUS, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Minority Veterans of America, National Women's Law Center, SEIU, the American Psychological Association, Sunrise Movement, the United States Student Association, and Young Invincibles.

Congress has already granted the Secretary of Education the [legal authority to broadly cancel student debt](#) under section 432(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1082(a)), which gives the Secretary the authority to modify, "... compromise, waive, or release any right, title, claim, lien, or demand, however acquired, including any equity or any right of redemption." The Department of Education [has used this authority](#) to implement modest relief for federal student loan borrowers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**This resolution:**

- Recognizes the Secretary of Education's broad administrative authority to cancel up to \$50,000 in Federal student debt, [using the modification and compromise authority Congress has already granted the Secretary](#) in law;
- Calls on President Biden to take executive action to administratively cancel up to \$50,000 in Federal student loan debt for Federal student loan borrowers using existing legal authorities under section 432(a) of the Higher Education act of 1965 and any authorities available under the law;
- Encourages President Biden to use the executive's authority under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prevent administrative debt cancellation from resulting in a tax liability for borrowers;
- Encourages President Biden, in taking such executive action, to ensure that administrative debt cancellation helps close racial wealth gaps and avoids the bulk of federal student debt cancellation benefits accruing to the wealthiest borrowers; and
- Encourages President Biden to continue to pause student loan payments and interest accumulation for Federal student loan borrowers for the entire duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Joining the resolution are Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Jon Ossoff (D-GA), Ben Ray Luján (D-NM), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), and Bernard Sanders (I-VT), along with Representatives Ilhan Omar (D-MN-05), Maxine Waters (D-CA-43), Chair of the House Financial Services Committee, Alma Adams (D-NC-12), Jamaal Bowman (D-NY-16), Mondaire Jones (D-NY-17) and Ritchie Torres (D-NY-15), Nanette Barragan (D-CA-44), Earl Blumenauer (D-OR-03), Cori Bush (D-MO-01), Yvette Clarke (D-NY-09), Steve Cohen (D-TN-09), Veronica Escobar (D-TX-16), Adriano Espaillat (D-NY-13), Jesus "Chuy" Garcia (D-IL-04), Jimmy Gomez (D-CA-34), Vicente Gonzalez (D-TX-15), Raul Grijalva (D-AZ-03), Alcee Hastings (D-FL-02), Jahana Hayes (D-CT-05), Pramila Jayapal (D-WA-07), Hank Johnson (D-GA-04), Ro Khanna (D-CA-17), Al Lawson (D-FL-05), Barbara Lee (D-CA-13), Andy Levin (D-MI-09), Alan Lowenthal (D-CA-47), James P. McGovern (D-MA-02), Grace Meng (D-NY-06), Jerrold Nadler (D-NY-10), Grace Napolitano (D-CA-32), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Alexandria Ocasio Cortez (D-NY-14), Jimmy Panetta (D-CA-20), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL-09), Albio Sires (D-NJ-08), Bennie Thompson (D-MS-02), Rashida Tlaib (D-MI-13), Nydia Velazquez (D-NY-07), Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ-12), Nikema Williams (D-GA-05), Frederica Wilson (D-FL-24), Madeleine Dean (D-PA-04), Brendan Boyle (D-PA-02), André Carson (D-IN-07), and Mark Pocan (D-IN-07).