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Downing: Should college degrees get bailed out by taxpayers?

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From the American working-class person's vantage point, the list of near-worthless college degrees from publicly funded universities is too long.

The bookends for these questionable degrees may be the gender-transgender-queer-sexuality studies degree offered by the University of Arizona and the master's degree in "foresight" that can be earned in a year at the University of Houston.

As the ventriloquist's dummy Mortimer Snerd liked to say, "Who'd have thunk it?"

On the shelf with these fanciful fields are volumes of grievance-studies degrees — black studies, women's studies, critical race and ethnic studies, or this one: An interdisciplinary studies degree with a minor in intersectionality studies from **Utah State University**.

These are dilettante diplomas for those planning careers in government and nonprofits, many of which are, if we're honest, surrogate government agencies that masquerade as independent from their funding troughs.

Private sector employers look at such credentials on resumes and groan. These degree holders are not prepared to work in the real world or add value to companies. They are not producers or innovators.

Our colleges are failing us by churning out entitled and surprisingly often illiterate graduates who want to be paid for showing up to work in their "Nevertheless, She Voted" t-shirts, their pumps primed to sue their employers at the slightest workplace inconvenience or for not being able to work from home.

Increasingly, Americans understand the universities that parents send their children to these days have become indoctrination camps. Teens go out the door and arrive at academia as normal, young people, entering the halls of knowledge in relatively good shape. What the higher education industry launches from its halls is often an illogical,

anxious, confused graduate with a degree in equity, diversity, and inclusion, and a student loan debt the size of a house down payment.

Into this public recognition of questionable return on investment comes President Joe Biden's plan to forgive the student loan debts of millions of recent college graduates.

Biden's plan is evidence that a college diploma doesn't confer any degree of common sense. Millions of Americans who did not go to college can figure out quickly they should not have to pay back the college loans for which someone else signed responsibility. After all, that's what GoFundMe is for.

It insults the intelligence of these Americans that we're even having this national conversation.

The U.S. Supreme Court sent a strong signal last month that Biden's scheme to forgive \$10,000 to \$20,000 per federal student loan borrower is unconstitutional. The justices are expected to make a decision by the end of June.

To be clear, this is a separate matter from the predatory student loan case that the Ninth Circuit weighed in on last week, permitting the case against certain colleges to move forward, and allowing student loan borrowers to have their debts canceled. That case involves about 200,000 borrowers and a \$6 billion debt relief to students who say schools misled them about the quality of academic programs or other related promises, such as job guarantees.

Conservatives in Congress are not waiting for the black robes to decide on the "get out of school free" question. Lawmakers are using the Congressional Review Act process to contest the ability of Biden to simply buy his re-election, one loan payment at a time. This will be the fourth time that the CRA has been used to tell the president he is flunking American Public Policy 101.

This coming week, the U.S. House will likely pass the CRA and send it to the Senate, where it appears to have bipartisan support. Biden may veto the CRA, but he still risks being schooled by the Supreme Court.

What would the CRA do? It puts an end to the president's pause on student loan payments, which has been extended six times and costs Americans \$5 billion a month. This current deferral of payments will cost \$195 billion by the time the current Biden extension expires in August.

Only an elitist mind thinks it's a good idea that the people who went to college should have their debts covered by those who didn't, through a \$400 billion transfer of responsibility.

According to a recent *Wall Street Journal* poll, only 56% of Americans think a four-year college degree is worth the price of admission. A **Cato Institute** poll showed that up to 76% of Americans oppose transferring student debt to taxpayers if it drives up the price of college, and two-thirds oppose it if taxes would be increased.

In a perfect world, American universities would be held in high regard, and be producing graduates ready to move the country forward and solve real-world problems.

That's not the world we're living in. Our higher education institutions are broken, and we have a federal government trying to force us to pay for their misdeeds.

Congress should pass the CRA quickly and send Biden a message: The working people of America are busy wrapping our minds around the \$32 trillion in debt that we are yoked with. Americans are not in the mood to pay down a college graduate's debt so that young person can buy a brand new, federally subsidized e-car, while working-class Americans face living out of their old Ford Broncos.