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## Free College? Not So Much

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A growing number of policy experts aren't jumping on board Hillary Clinton's tuition-free college plan for a number of significant reasons. Hillary estimates that her plan would give up to \$500 billion more to public universities and colleges over the next decade. Clinton claims this is needed to combat growing student loan debt and the ever-increasing cost of higher education. (What she *doesn't* say is that it's a craven pander to Bernie Sanders Millennials.) While no one argues rising college tuition isn't a concern, there is little evidence to suggest that making tuition free for most college students would lower costs or increase graduation rates.

Giving public colleges and universities more money doesn't mean they will spend it wisely or efficiently. In fact, it only encourages greater tuition increases since it'll be the government paying bill, not students. Free tuition also doesn't produce higher graduation rates. Third Way, a center-left think tank, has reported that students with a modest amount of debt are more likely to earn a degree than those who have no debt. Neal McCluskey of the Cato Institute stated, "The less of your own money you spend on something, the less you tend to be focused on whether or not you're doing the best, most efficient thing."

There is also evidence that other countries offering free tuition have a lower percentage of students pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering and math — all fields where jobs are expected to grow by 10% over the next decade.

Finally, what may be one of the most troubling aspects of Hillary's plan is the estimated impact it would have on private colleges. Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce estimates that private school enrollment would decrease by 11%, whereas public school enrollment would increase by 16%. This could effectively put some private schools out of business, so once again the government would be engaged in picking winners and losers. Americans would be wise to stop Hillary from doing to higher education what Barack Obama and the Democrats did to health care.