

## Education Cuts Needed; Massive Spending Fuels Waste, Deficits

Posted By [Hans Bader](#) On February 14, 2011 @ 10:32 am In [Economy](#), [Employment](#), [Politics as Usual](#), [Zeitgeist](#) | [No Comments](#)

Education expert Neal McCluskey earlier lamented the [failure of House Republicans to propose](#)<sup>[1]</sup> meaningful cuts in education spending, “despite the fact that the ivory tower is soaking in putrid, taxpayer-funded waste. Quite simply, the federal government pours [hundreds of billions of dollars](#)<sup>[2]</sup> into our ivy-ensconced institutions every year, but what that has largely produced is atrociously low [graduation rates](#)<sup>[3]</sup>; at-best [dubious amounts of learning](#)<sup>[4]</sup> for those who [do graduate](#)<sup>[5]</sup>; ever-fancier [facilities](#)<sup>[6]</sup>; and [rampant tuition inflation](#)<sup>[7]</sup> that renders a higher education no more affordable to students but keeps colleges fat and happy.” Shortly thereafter, in an effort to trim the deficit, House Republicans came out with some additional cuts, [proposing the elimination](#)<sup>[8]</sup> of some wasteful education programs.

If the GOP is reluctant to make cuts, Obama is much, much worse: he earlier sought to [double education spending](#)<sup>[9]</sup>, and Obama’s recent [State of the Union](#)<sup>[10]</sup> called for more increases in [education spending](#)<sup>[11]</sup> (and other [wasteful boondoggles](#)<sup>[12]</sup> at taxpayer expense), even though many students learn little in college. As we noted earlier, half “the nation’s undergraduates show almost no gains in learning in their first two years of college,” according to a study cited in [USA Today](#)<sup>[13]</sup>. “36% showed little change” even after four years. Although education spending has [exploded](#)<sup>[14]</sup>, students “spent 50% less time studying compared with students a few decades ago.” “32% never took a course in a typical semester where they read more than 40 pages per week.” States spend hundreds of millions of dollars operating colleges that are worthless diploma mills, yet manage to [graduate almost no one](#)<sup>[15]</sup> — like Chicago State, “which has just a [12.8 percent six-year graduation rate](#)<sup>[16]</sup>.”

College degrees are delivering less and less, even as students graduate [massively in debt](#)<sup>[17]</sup>. Law schools deceptively claim that virtually all their graduates get jobs. But they inflate their jobs figures by treating as success stories even students who end up working in low-paying non-legal jobs like “[waiting tables at Applebees](#)<sup>[18]</sup>,” “[stocking aisles](#)<sup>[18]</sup> at Home Depot,” or [babysitting](#)<sup>[19]</sup> — or in [part-time](#)<sup>[19]</sup> temporary jobs. And they sometimes [hide joblessness](#)<sup>[19]</sup> by “losing track” of easy-to-locate nearby graduates who are jobless. “Enron-type accounting standards have become the norm,” [says William Henderson](#)<sup>[18]</sup> of Indiana University, one of many exasperated law professors who are asking the American Bar Association to overhaul the way law schools assess themselves.”

America already produces so many more liberal-arts graduates than it needs that [5,057 janitors have Ph.D.’s](#)<sup>[20]</sup> or other advanced degrees. People who went to college due to rising college attendance rates mostly ended up [in low-skilled jobs](#)<sup>[21]</sup>, even as their [tuitions soared](#)<sup>[22]</sup> to pay for growing [educational bureaucracies](#)<sup>[23]</sup>. Education spending in America is [huge compared](#)<sup>[24]</sup> to most countries.

*Image credit: [Honeywell-Nobel Initiative’s flickr photostream](#)<sup>[25]</sup>.*

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