



Hillary Clinton Wants 83% Of American Families To Attend College For Free

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With Sen. Bernie Sanders by her side and millennials in her sights, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton vowed today that students will get free tuition at public colleges and universities if their families earn less than \$125,000. Sanders said that is 83% of American families.

During their primary campaign, Sanders had pushed for free, four-year public college tuition while Clinton had focused on “debt-free” college. She also used to say that students should make a “compact” and chip in by working 10 hours a week. She didn’t mention any chipping-in at today’s speech.

Clinton spoke at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, where the tuition is \$14,410 for in-state students, plus another \$3,214 in mandatory fees, making it one of the most expensive state schools in the country for locals.

Clinton also said students wouldn’t have to pay a penalty for going to out-of-state schools; the free-tuition provision would apply across state lines. UNH charges out-of-state students \$28,210 for tuition. That pales compared with the University of Michigan’s out-of-state tuition, which is more than \$45,000.

Saying that New Hampshire students have the highest proportion of debt in the country, Clinton vowed that “we will help you refinance.” She called for a “moratorium” so entrepreneurs could put off their loan payments for a few years while they get their businesses going. There also would be “loan forgiveness” for graduates who go into public or national service.

Clinton didn’t go into details on who would pay for this program, but Sanders did. He pointed to “massive income inequality” and attacked Republican candidate Donald Trump’s proposal to lift the estate tax, which Sanders says would allow families to keep \$4 trillion of their own money.

“It’s far more important to invest (in education) than to give Trump and his family tax breaks,” Sanders said. “The Walton family (of Wal-Mart) would get a \$50 billion tax break if we lift the estate tax.”

Clinton said the states would be pressured to reverse any cut-backs they have made in spending on higher education. She said “carrots and sticks” will be used to punish states that don’t increase education spending and reward those that get with her program.

Neal McCluskey, who is the director of the Center for Educational Freedom at the libertarian Cato Institute, blogged about Clinton’s mention of free college at Monday’s debate:

No matter what the plan, nothing with ‘free’ in it is a good idea for higher education. None of this would be free to taxpayers, of course: the Clinton tuition-free plan has been estimated to cost the feds \$500 billion over 10 years, and would cost state taxpayers billions more if states matched the spending increases to get federal bucks. The debt-free plan was estimated to cost the feds \$350 billion over 10 years, also with state matching. Of course the ‘wealthy’ would pay for all this, likely removing money from more productive uses.

One of the oddest moments was when Clinton pooh-pooed the FAFSA, the long online form that’s mandatory for students applying for financial aid, for its out-dated technology. Apparently she’s not aware that the second F stands for Federal. The financial aid system is operated under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Education.