

Elizabeth Warren trashes for-profit colleges: They're 'ripping off young people'

By [Maria Santos](#)
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Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) went after for-profit colleges in [an interview with Salon](#), naming them the second largest cause of problems in higher education.

Warren first lamented that state universities do not fund a large enough portion of each student's education.

Then she went on to criticize the fact that one in 10 undergraduates attends a for-profit college, saying that "the federal government is currently subsidizing a for-profit industry that is ripping off young people."

"Those young people are graduating — many of them are never graduating — and of those that are graduating, many of them have certificates that won't get them jobs, that don't produce the benefits of a state college education," Warren said.

Warren also asserted that only children of the non-elite are "targeted" by for-profits: single mothers, young people who are the first in their family to graduate from college. "They're getting preyed on by these schools."

Warren makes these "for-profit" institutions sound pretty terrifying—although policy experts, like the Cato Institute's [Neal McCluskey](#), have noted that, in context, for-profit institutions probably do not serve particular demographics any worse than their state school equivalents.

Isolating students at state schools who are similar to the average for-profit student, who tend to be older and low-income, state and nonprofit schools also have terrible track records.

"Consider completion rates," writes McCluskey. "When you compare for-profits with public colleges with noncompetitive admissions — the schools most likely dealing with similar types of students — for-profits equal or outperform them."

And for-profit enrollment is booming for a reason: state and nonprofit schools are failing their students.

Warren also took shots at Obama during the interview, saying, “He picked his economic team and when the going got tough, his economic team picked Wall Street.”