

# Canceling Student Debt Would Be an Insult to Trade Workers

Americans took out \$1.7 trillion in government loans for college tuition.

Now, some don't want to pay it back.

President Joe Biden says they shouldn't have to. He wants to cancel at least \$10,000 and maybe \$50,000 of every student's debt.

"They're in real trouble," says Biden in my latest video, "having to make choices between paying their student loan and paying the rent."

Poor students!

But wait: Shouldn't they have given some thought to debt payments when they signed up for overpriced colleges? When they majored in subjects like photography or women's studies, unlikely to lead to good jobs? When they took six years to graduate (a third don't graduate even after six years).

Shouldn't politicians also acknowledge that it's taxpayer loans that let bloated colleges keep increasing tuition at twice the rate of inflation?

Yes.

But they don't.

*Dirty Jobs* host Mike Rowe points out that students' demand for loan forgiveness is "kind of self-involved."

"I know guys who worked hard to get a construction operation running. Some had to take out a loan on a big old diesel truck. Why would we forgive the cost of a degree but not the cost of a lease payment?"

It's a good question.

"For some reason," continues Rowe, "we think a tool that looks like a diploma is somehow more important than that big piece of metal in the driveway that allows the guy to build homes that you...are in."

The political class does focus on subsidizing college.

"Now everybody is armed with a degree. What kind of world is that?" asks Rowe.

“Everybody dreams of being in the corner office, but nobody knows how to build the corner office?”

Lots of good jobs in skilled trades don’t require a college degree, he points out. “The push for college came at the expense of every other form of education. Shop class was taken out of high school. We have denied millions of kids an opportunity to see what half the workforce looks like.”

It’s a reason America now has a shortage of skilled trade workers.

Yet, plumbers, elevator mechanics construction managers, etc., make \$100,000 a year.

MikeroweWORKS Foundation gives young people scholarships to schools where they learn such trades. He seeks to make skilled labor “cool” again.

One Rowe scholarship recipient, Chloe Hudson, considered college but was shocked at what it cost.

“I was like, ‘I can’t afford this!’ I don’t want to be saddled with student debt the rest of my life!”

Instead, thanks to her Rowe scholarship, she learned how to weld, and now she has no trouble finding work.

“I’ve been under nuclear plants...been in water systems,” Hudson recounts. “Those jobs make me appreciate what I have now so much more.”

“What do you make?” I ask Hudson.

“\$3,000 a week,” she responds.

She’s appalled by today’s college student’s demand for loan forgiveness.

“There is not a single loan I have ever taken out where I didn’t have an expectation put on myself that I was going to repay it,” says Hudson. “That’s getting up at four o’clock in the morning and making sure I’m at work on time. That’s staying late. That’s working weekends.”

But now she will have to help pay for all those college students who won’t pay their debts.

“I am taxed heavily,” complains Hudson. “It’s not a good feeling to know that the government thinks that they can spend my dollars better than I can.”

Right. Government *doesn’t* spend our dollars better than we do. “Forgive student loans” really means workers must pay for privileged students who don’t.