

RESOLUTION

Calling on the federal government to enact a plan by the end of President Biden's first 100 days in office to cancel all student loan debt and begin the transition to education as a public good.

WHEREAS, Cancelling student loan debt and eliminating debt in higher education represents an enormous economic opportunity for Philadelphia to increase spending in our local community, support individuals' upward mobility, and provide a deeply needed stimulus during the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian and Pacific Islander, and other communities of color; economically disadvantaged residents; older people; and young adults are most impacted by student debt; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is a proudly diverse city that is weighed down by student loan debt, with nearly one in four adults carrying student loan debt, higher than the national average of 17 percent; and

WHEREAS, Student loan debt is another factor that drags families deeper into poverty, further exacerbating Philadelphia's already high poverty rate and status as the poorest big city in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Student loan debt in the city of Philadelphia has consistently penalized poor people and served as an additional burden for working class Philadelphians, with approximately 30 percent of people living in the lowest-income zip codes defaulting on their loans, only 16 percent of borrowers in the poorest zip codes able to make on-time payments and experiencing decreasing student debt balances, and student debt delinquencies being concentrated in Philadelphia's majority-minority zip codes; and

WHEREAS, Because debt is associated with negative mental and physical health outcomes, such as stress, depression, obesity, and early mortality, abolishing student debt also represents an incredible opportunity for Philadelphia to provide better overall health outcomes to the general population; and

WHEREAS, Cancelling student debt is a policy that is strongly supported across all political parties and across the country, but especially here in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, student debt cancellation is only one step toward the establishment of an equitable, accessible higher education system; and

WHEREAS, federal student loan debt is held by the United States government, and the Higher Education Act of 1965 gives the President and Secretary of Education the authority to cancel all of it; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, that we hereby call on the federal government to enact a plan by the end of President Biden's first 100 days in office to cancel all student loan debt and begin the transition to education as a public good.

February 25, 2021

Introduced by:
Councilmember Kendra Brooks