

College Debt

My fellow Americans,

Our country was founded on the idea of equal opportunity. This value applies to every situation, and should especially apply when it comes to the pursuit of higher education. Every child, no matter who they are, their background, their economic status, or where they live should always have access to a high-quality education. Money should never stand in the way of an education desired by a student, cost should never be a barrier in the individual setting oneself up for success. Some form of higher education, something beyond high school, could not be more important in today's economy. Today, a college education is often required to obtain a high paying job. Almost 70% of current jobs in the work force require an education beyond high school. College graduates make an average of \$52,000 whereas High School Graduates comparatively only make an average of \$27,000. We can't, as a country, take the opportunity to reach success away from individuals.

Today, our students, both young and old, are victims of what we call "crushing student debt". In our national community, this is a pressing issue that needs to be resolved. As mentioned in this bill, "the 2016 student loan debt will reach over 1.2 trillion dollars nationwide, outpacing the total credit card and auto loan debt for the first time" (Bill No: 1-2016). Since, 2004 the cost of college has increased almost 90% and compared to the college cost in 1980, they have increased by 124%. This consequently impacts the students. In 2004, approximately 22.5 million people had students loans. That number is now 43 million. The average student graduates with almost \$26,000 in student loans: For a young enthusiastic college graduate, ready to impart their knowledge upon the world; well, this is just unacceptable.

The future is bleak for those with student debt. Student debt forces graduates to put off important milestones in their lives such as having families, buying a house or car, or even meeting a minimum healthy lifestyle.

It is important that we recognize that ours is a diverse nation. From low-income families, wealthy families, and racial and ethnic minorities, we must come up with a plan for student debt that will benefit everyone.

I strongly support this bill because it is a step in the right direction towards resolving the student debt crisis. It not only outlines a plan that will benefit students in paying off their student loans and reevaluates government spending, but it illustrates an understanding of the issue itself. Specifically, in Section 3; Sub-Section B, it argues that graduates should have a stable job and have a minimum yearly salary before they start paying back their loans. I am in full support of

this as it will not only help alleviate the stress students endure post graduation to pay back loans before interest starts to accumulate, but it will also benefit our economy in having a lower loan default rate.

Tonight, we made history and provided our current and future generations of college graduates with hope in the midst of challenging times. Tonight, we march together in confidence, energized by this victory for our nation. “We did not choose our future - we shaped it” (Obama).

Thank you. God bless you and God bless the United States of America.

Immigration

My fellow Americans,

Immigration is a key part of our history. It has not only shaped our history, but it has given us the nation we have today. A nation that is strong with resilience - a nation that values diversity and opportunity for everyone. We have all come from around the world, and the United States continues to be a beacon of hope for many who desire to come here for life, liberty, equality, opportunity, and the pursuit of happiness.

Although there are some sections of Bill Number: 3-2016 that I support such as the concept of increased availability of visas to bright and determined students and to workers who are needed in order for our economy to flourish, I must enact my Presidential Veto because the bill fails to protect the basic values that we hold dear as Americans: privacy, liberty, fairness and equality.

Section 5 requires observation of guests in our country, which violates the basic rights to privacy that we all are entitled to living in the United States of America. We can't invite people to come work in our country and then treat them as if they are dangers to our nation.

Section 4, Sub-Section B states: “If an illegal immigrant overstays or does not check in two weeks past their check in, then they are criminalized and deported on sight”. This section not only labels workers using the visa as ‘illegal’ but it subjects them to a visitation requirement that normal American workers would not have to abide by. The remedy for not checking in fails in providing a humane and reasonable process for utilizing the visa.

The bill also fails to address and acknowledge the families of workers who might lose their visa status at any time. There's no consideration given to children who might be in school or spouses who may be seeking or are employed themselves.

Now, I do agree that it is unfair to those Immigrants who come to the United States legitimately and play by the rules to see others who come here illegally and are allowed to stay. This is an issue we need to resolve. We need a bill that both offers more opportunity to those who would come to this country to work, learn, and contribute to our economy and society and upholds our American values in how we treat these guests in our country.

Written at the base of the Statue of Liberty is the quote: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Between 1886 and 1924, almost 14 million immigrants entered the United States through New York. The Statue of Liberty was a reassuring sign that they had arrived in the land of their dreams. To these anxious newcomers, the Statue's uplifted torch did not suggest "enlightenment," as her creators intended, but rather, "welcome." Over time, Lady Liberty emerged as a symbol of hope to generations of immigrants, and this reflects upon what our country is to those immigrants, and it is important that we hold ourselves to the standards that are expected of this great country.

We need to remember who we are as a nation. Our families have all come from somewhere. We are accepting of others and continue to be seen as a beacon of hope to many. Let us continue to be that light in this world.

Thank you. God bless you and God bless the United States of America.