

Students and workers outraged at Supreme Court ruling blocking Biden's partial student debt forgiveness plan

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The US Supreme Court's decision to block Biden's partial student loan forgiveness plan means that 43 million borrowers will be denied limited debt relief from the crushing \$1.7 trillion in outstanding federal student loans.

The ruling was made by the far-right majority of the court, which also handed down a ruling this week which sanctions discrimination against LGBTQ people, and whose members have been caught taking massive payoffs from billionaires.

The court's decision was facilitated by the Democrats' refusal to make any serious attempt to pass a student loan forgiveness program in Congress, despite having a majority in the House and Senate for two years.

Two of the three justices in the liberal minority of the court joined with the majority in issuing a far-reaching attack on the right to strike ruling in "favor of allowing an employer to file a lawsuit and recover monetary compensation for 'damages' incurred as a result of a strike," in an 8-1 vote.

These, along with other attacks on democratic rights, such as last year's decision to overturn the constitutional right to abortion, have exposed the court as, far from a "neutral" arbiter, an open tool of the ruling class.

Furthermore, neither the Democrats nor their pseudo-left compatriots in the Democratic Socialists of America had any serious response, with Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez appearing on CNN after the student debt ruling to call Biden to merely suspend student loan interest during a 12-month "on-ramp period" as student loan payments are set to resume. She made no appeal to even oppose the ruling, let alone

fight for higher education as a social right.

Many on social media vented their outrage against the political establishment and government, as was evident on the Reddit page r/StudentLoans. A common point that has been made by users is that the whole affair has essentially been a sham and that the Democrats never really had any intention of forgiving student loan debt let alone making higher education a right or even "affordable," with many voicing disillusionment with the Democrats.

Here are some of the representative comments:

•"I view Biden's response to this only as a campaign carrot. His team is more interested in using it as a device to get votes. If they are "confident" that using the Higher Education Act to pass relief when using the HEROES act did not, why didn't they just use the Higher Education Act in the first place? This and many other promises from politicians have become more about posturing and dragging out "fights" to become elected again rather than actually providing results. Secretary Miguel Cardona said on his Twitter the other day "@POTUS, @VP, and I will never stop fighting for borrowers..." at this stage I truly think that's the point. Keep "fighting," so it can be used as a carrot for the next election."

•"It is always the same nonsense. Republicans control everything: Nothing changes. Democrats control everything: Nothing changes. Almost as if gasp billionaires control everything, and the actual parties do not matter. I don't think this was ever meant to pass, and as many suspected it was just a way to get young voters out. It also did nothing to fix the system, so the problem would just repeat itself when the next generation went to university. If they actually cared

they would have made it so you can declare bankruptcy on student loans at the very least.”

- “Keep the discussion going for as many election cycles as possible, is the answer.”

Another asked, rhetorically, “Who believed this was actually going to happen?”

Joseph from San Diego sent the following to the WSWS concerning the end of limited student loan forgiveness:

As a Pell Grant recipient, my family demonstrated the need for financial assistance when I applied for college. Being the youngest of four children supported by our school-teacher mother, the “estimated family contribution” that my family would be able to provide for me to attend school was below \$1,500 according to the financial aid office. I achieved a GPA above 4.0 in high school and obtained thousands of dollars in grants and scholarships due to my academic achievements, but the outlandish cost of attendance at even public universities in this country meant I had to go into thousands of dollars of debt to afford tuition on top of meal plans, a place to live, books, etc.

After graduating in 2021 and quickly securing positions in economic research, the pause on loan repayments allowed me financial stability for the first time in my life. However, my real desire is to pursue higher education. As the Biden administration promised loan forgiveness and released their plan, already a dull version of what his campaign promised, I was eligible for \$20,000 forgiven. This not only meant that I would realistically be able to pay off the remainder of my debt, which many of my friends still wouldn’t be able to say, but I could also consider pursuing higher education without worrying about years of loan repayments and interest on top of paying for tuition and the rising cost of living.

Instead of financial stability for people like me, though, the unelected, unchecked and out of touch judges on the Supreme Court serving life-long terms decided that millions of Americans will have to repay these predatory loans,

pressured onto students at the age of 17 or 18 to pay for the absurd cost of simply getting an education in this country.

My future will now be determined by my student debt. A public utility that is free in countries around the world will continue to define the financial standing of workers in this country, from those who decide they can’t afford college to those who took on thousands of dollars of debt for something that is routinely provided to all citizens elsewhere. For me personally, this ruling, along with the other recent rulings, showcases that the US education system, as well as the entire judicial system, do not work in the interests of those they supposedly serve, but rather in the interests of loan providers, corporations and the continued domination of capital as the rule of law.



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