

American Federation of Teachers: Trump/Devos education bill assaults MATC students

Posted on Monday, May 22, 2017

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Contact:

Dr. Michael Rosen
414-467 8908
rosenm@matc.edu

Leaders of Milwaukee Area Technical College's faculty union accuse President Trump and Education Secretary DeVos of waging class warfare on working class students like those at MATC.

Dr. Michael Rosen, MATC Economics Professor and President of the American Federation of Teachers Local 212, MATC's faculty union, charges, "The proposed 2018 Education Budget is nothing less than an assault on higher education and on the nation's economically disadvantaged students. It is unconscionable and shortsighted for President Trump to fund his billionaire tax cuts by denying the nation's working and middle class students the opportunity to attend college."

Rosen explains that the Trump/DeVos budget, leaked to the Washington Post, slashes federal higher education funding. "It lets the Perkins Career and Technical Education Grant program expire and ends the subsidized student loan program that pays the interest on undergraduate loans while borrowers are in college. These programs are crucial for MATC students to afford college," according to Rosen.

Calling Trump's budget "An historic assault on college affordability," Rosen explained that it would make post-secondary education less accessible to the

nation's twelve million working and middle class students who rely on financial aid.

"Furthermore" stated Rosen, "it undermines the nation's efforts to build a high-wage, knowledge-based economy by slashing support for career and technical education."

"Student debt is already at a crisis level and continues to be a significant drag on the economy; yet, Trump's and DeVos' proposal slashes loans and work-study programs for disadvantaged students and ends subsidized loans for students still in school, which will assuredly cause student debt to soar even higher, " explained Dr. Rosen.

Life Sciences Professor and Local 212 Executive Vice President, Dr. Lisa Conley, described the impact: "This proposal turns disadvantaged students into moneymakers for for-profit firms, like the Education Management Corp., that service student loans, refinance the debt, and collect on loans that go into default. Federal financial aid was established fifty years ago to provide access to higher education not to serve the interests of investment banks like Goldman Sachs, the largest shareholder of Education Management Corp. These federal programs were designed to serve people, not corporations."

The federal work study program allows economically disadvantaged students to work on campus, often in areas related to their field of study, as a means to earn money to help pay for their education.

According to Dr. Conley, "Our students juggle school, work and family obligations. The work study program allows them to focus on their classes while they earn income on campus rather than squandering valuable time traveling back-and-forth between school and work."

The budget also "zeroes out "the \$15 million CCAMPIS program, which helps low-income parents in college afford on-campus childcare.

"One out of every four college students is a parent," said David Espinoza, MATC Early Childhood Education Professor. "Parents need to be able to pursue their education without worrying about the safety and health of their children. Eliminating this program will make it virtually impossible for millions of mainly female students to obtain the education their families need for a better more productive life."

The proposed budget also eliminates the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. It's designed to encourage college graduates to pursue careers in government and non-profit fields the market undervalues by forgiving their loans after they make 120 payments under an income-based repayment program. The program was established in 2007, and the first qualifying borrowers would seek forgiveness this year.

As a final insult to MATC students and those like them around the country, Dr. Rosen explained that this budget does not increase Pell Grants or adjust them for inflation. Rather, it finances them by raiding the Pell reserves by almost \$4 million, thus threatening its long term viability.