



Gordon Watts <gww1210@gmail.com>

Re: Bill - I made the suggested revisions to my guest OpEd submission

Gww1210@aol.com <Gww1210@aol.com>

Mon, Jul 11, 2016 at 5:50 PM

To: bill.thompson@theledger.com, voice@theledger.com, Gww1210@aol.com

Cc: Caleb_Orr@rubio.senate.gov, Eduardo_Sacasa@rubio.senate.gov, Taleen_Mekhdjavakian@billnelson.senate.gov,

Alicia_Tighe@billnelson.senate.gov, Kyle.Glenn@mail.house.gov, gww1210@gmail.com

Bill, thank you for speaking with me a little earlier today. Here are 3 problems that worried me about my guest Column submission regarding Congressman Dennis Ross (and, to some extent, about Senators Rubio and Nelson) --

1) You might want to write a follow-up Editorial (either when my guest column/op-ed publishes or afterwards), and you might need "a few ideas":

(A) The fact that ?1.2 MILLION people signed an online petition is noteworthy: http://pac.petitions.moveon.org/sign/support-the-student-loan?source=none&fb_test=0 See also: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/27/student-loan-forgiveness-petition-delivered_n_1631852.html and <http://www.scp.org/blogs/politics/2013/03/25/13037/will-a-million-online-signatures-push-congress-to/> and <http://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/paying-for-college/articles/2012/06/28/1-million-people-show-support-for-student-loan-forgiveness-act> and even: <http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/student-loan-ranger/2013/01/09/meet-the-author-behind-the-student-loan-forgiveness-act-petition> While most online petitions can be faked, not this one: Many signatories made comments. (B) College debt is like 1.4 TRILLION, and, as taxpayers guarantee defaulted debts, this WILL crash the US Dollar if left unfixed. (C) America USED to have free college, and Germany DOES have free college, and if free college is a defensible, how much more my modest compromise? (D) Uneducated citizens imperil, jeopardize, and endanger National Security yada-yada-yada...

2) You need to find a "spot" to put my column - meaning someone else "gets the boot." Well, I can't help you there, but see above and below to show my column is "more deserving," since this poses a real danger to US Economy if not addressed, and many people are complaining about this "new form of slavery" - Debt Slavery.

3) The word-length issue, eh?? This dude's column (like 838 or so words in all: "Nature is evidence of a great Designer," February 22, 2006, <http://www.theledger.com/article/20060222/NEWSCHIEF/302229989?p=all&tc=pgall> Jack T. Harrison of Winter Haven has earned a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from the University of Georgia.) is REAL long. Monkey see-monkey do, and I'm a monkey!

4) Oh, and I forgot to mention-Ross' office has had plenty of notice of this: I not only spoke in the TeleTownHall meeting, linked below (and on my website: download a copy!), but also I regularly include Kyle Glenn, his Deputy aide, in my correspondence (check ALL your emails & look at the cc recipients), and I also semi-regularly spam his Facebook and Twitter feeds - and I invited you to harass them too, remember? I like Dennis, but (and this is very important), as both House AND Senate go out of session this Friday, I think (and absentee ballots are soon to be mailed out, about 1 month before General Election Tuesday, I think?), we race against the clock, and he can not claim ignorance or feign surprise should The Ledger ask him about this. (See also the CC line of THIS email, where I include both Senators, my Congressman, and myself file copies -and let's see if I do my job to keep everyone in the loop and on the same page.)

But, since I know you can't guarantee more-than >700+plus words, here are several versions, both long and short - OK, here goes nothing!!...

"Long version" - below - Total words =844 (including title, subtitle, column proper, and footer describing writer) Column only (between the word "LAKELAND and the footer description) = 666 words. "Short version" occurs when you delete everything that is red with yellow-highlighting. Total words = 766 (whole thing: Title, Subtitle, column proper, & footer description of myself) Column only (between the word "LAKELAND and the footer description: 638 words.

[OP-ED COLUMN]

Republican Congressman breaks with party, admits college loans deserve bankruptcy:

Rep. Dennis A. Ross, of Lakeland, Fla., bravely admits **that** college students deserve bankruptcy safety net, like all other loans **afford**, and affirms **the** small-government view that we need to "get The Government out of the business of loaning the money," but has yet to introduce or cosponsor legislation to address either **problem**

By Gordon Wayne Watts, **guest OpEd writer**

Published: Sunday, July 18, 2016 at 12:01 a.m., Last Modified: Monday, July 11, 2016 at 11:58 p.m.

LAKELAND—In what may indicate a shift in public opinion on the contentious College Debt issue, Representative Dennis Ross, representing Florida's 15th Congressional district (including Lakeland) admitted in a recent TownHall Meeting that if student borrowers can't repay their loans, we should 'go back' to our prior U.S. Bankruptcy Laws, for, among other reasons, because "we're not really doing a good service, either

way...by making them over-indebted for their Education.” Ross breaks ranks with the GOP in this candid admission. For example, H.R. 1674, the “Private Student Loan Bankruptcy Fairness Act of 2015,” a bill by Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN-9th), has 40 cosponsors, all Democrat. Typically most **or all** cosponsors of such bills are Democrat, but both parties **(who have, at times, had complete control of the House, Senate, & Oval Office)** are reluctant to allow bankruptcy discharge for college loans like Credit Card users, banks, or the “über-rich” **regularly do**.

Ross made these statements in a “TeleTownHall” meeting (THM), **back on 05-21-2014** (2 years ago), but has yet to introduce bills offering relief to suffering students. This is troubling because Ross claims to support such legislation, yet hasn’t acted on his belief. A review is in order: **(1)** We remember my infamous ‘Heavy Hand’ letter to the editor, complaining of Ross blocking people from **his** social media. However, what most don’t know is that his office unblocked me about 12 hours **BEFORE** my letter published. Since they didn’t have a heads up, their unblocking wasn’t “reactionary,” but rather because Ross & staff have integrity. (He fired a staffer for this overstep.) **(2)** Moreover, Ross knows he’ll receive tough questions from me in THM’s, but doesn’t shy away from calling on me (as the YouTube vid of the THM documents). Thus, Ross has honour & integrity.

Even Ross, whose record is above average (pro-life, 2nd amendment supporter, once rated “most conservative” congressman), has been described as a ‘RINO’ by Conservative Review. He admits College Loans deserve bankruptcy, but has yet to introduce or cosponsor such legislation. Does he only represent the rich? Not only would bankruptcy (and other standard consumer protections, like truth in lending, refinancing, & statutes of limitations) help struggling borrowers, but they’d scare off lenders, resulting in sharp declines in tuition. Therefore:

First, please cosponsor bills like H.R. 3451, the Student Loan Bankruptcy Parity Act of 2015. (Actually, make college loans equal to Credit Card loans, which have ALL std consumer protections.)

Ross also said that we needed to “get The Government out of the business of loaning the money” However, he has yet to introduce a bill that does this. So, please end ALL HigherEd Loans, by lowering the “loan limits” gradually, and beginning **IMMEDIATELY** American colleges in the 50’s & 60’s were the best in the world **WITHOUT** need for loans: We can do without loans today. Many experts (Ron Paul & former Secretary of Ed, Bill Bennett) agree we shouldn’t even have College Loans in the first place: When Universities see subsidies, they increase tuition simply to pay **for** million-dollar salaries! (Bernie Sanders is right: American College used to be **FREE** and Germany **DOES** offer free college: If free college is appropriate, how much more justified & defensible are my **more** modest proposals?)

This costs students (skyrocketing tuition) and taxpayers (who back these loans), and without reforms, we will crash the US Dollar, which backs these toxic predatory loans.

Students are told from their youth that they need an education to compete in today’s world; let’s not punish them forever for doing what is right. So, I ask Congressman Ross to introduce legislation that represents the 99%, not the rich 1%—legislation that simply makes College Loans ‘equal’ in all respects to ‘Credit Card’ loans, and then once that’s done, end this wicked college loan system: We never needed it in the past & we need to end this new form of debt slavery: Slavery was wrong in the past—and it’s wrong now. It must stop.

[Gordon Watts (Gww1210@aol.com) is a Lakeland resident, part-time advocate, and one-time candidate for state house, who almost won on behalf of Terri Schiavo, all by himself, in state court, and, more recently, was believed to be the only NonLawyer that a Federal Appeals court allowed to participate in the recent spate of ‘Gay Marriage’ cases. Watts is currently asking the US Supreme Court to strike the law in question. See his blog, GordonWatts.com and GordonWayneWatts.com, for documentation of these claims or to listen to the THM.]

---End of guest op-ed submission

[[NOTE - for references verifying these claims, including the new item about Bernie Sanders, see e.g., references section here <http://gordonwatts.com/BraveRepublicanBreaksRanksWithGOP-HigheEd.html> and <http://gordonWAYNEwatts.com/BraveRepublicanBreaksRanksWithGOP-HigheEd.html> and for the bills I propose, plz see e.g., <http://gordonwatts.com/DennisRoss-on-HigherEd/BILLS/> or <http://gordonWAYNEwatts.com/DennisRoss-on-HigherEd/BILLS/> -- AND: to hear our dialogue in the Town Hall, see e.g.,

Wed. 05-21-2014: U.S. Rep. Dennis A. Ross (R-FL-15) Tele-Town Hall Meeting (with excerpts of 06-18-2014)

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7Z9wWWjTJo> (13:11 length)

“Student Loan and College Debt crisis Town Hall question,” by GordonWayneWatts, Published on Jul 13, 2014 – Cached at:

* www.GordonWatts.com/FannyDeregulation/DennisRoss-TeleTHM-Wed21May2014_WMV.wmv (right-click to save)

* www.GordonWatts.com/FannyDeregulation/DennisRoss-TeleTHM-Wed21May2014_WMV_mobile-phone-mpeg4.mp4 (right-click to save)

* www.GordonWayneWatts.com/FannyDeregulation/DennisRoss-TeleTHM-Wed21May2014_WMV.wmv (right-click to save)

* www.GordonWayneWatts.com/FannyDeregulation/DennisRoss-TeleTHM-Wed21May2014_WMV_mobile-phone-mpeg4.mp4 (right-click to save)]]

In a message dated 5/18/2016 1:14:33 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, Gww1210@aol.com <Gordon Wayne Watts> writes:

Thank you, Bill. - I've made a few editorial updates on my own blog's "front-page news" entry (which may give you ideas, if you're stuck with writer's block), but given the word limits that I think you can squeeze in @ The Ledger, I think you all are doing an excellent job!

Thank you, once again, for your dedication to excellence.

In a message dated 5/17/2016 12:17:40 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, bill.thompson@theledger.com writes:

Gordon, thanks. I will take a look at the changes and get back to you soon.

On Tue, May 17, 2016 at 9:22 AM, <Gww1210@aol.com> wrote:

Bill - I made all the editorial changes you suggested - please see the email attachment (in 3 formats). I got it down to almost 700 words.

Did I well?

In a message dated 5/4/2016 4:08:15 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time, Gww1210@aol.com writes:

Oops- I failed to answer your one question:

"Was this a recent shift?"

I don't know if it was a 'recent shift' in opinion by Dennis Ross, but it is certainly a "recent shift" in fortunes for college students regarding the GOP - the Republican Party.

Why do I say that? Well, the GOP has historically been BERY opposed to restoration of bankruptcy protections (and other consumer protections) to college loans - like even Credit Card users - or bankers - regularly enjoy.

The Ross statement breaks from the GOP, and, in that sense, it's a shift, even if a minor one. (I am guessing most Republicans don't share his views: I AM ASHAMED that I am a Republican...)

Does that clarify my meanings? I'm available 24/7 at my home and cell numbers below if you need further help. :)

In a message dated 5/4/2016 4:00:45 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time, Gww1210@aol.com writes:

Your one point, Bill, is an excellent one -- while Ross has probably not changed his mind (but simply been too timid to act on his core beliefs, as he said), I think we must be ready for both avenues:

1) He did not change his mind (most likely) -- LEDGER asks: Well, why didn't you act on your beliefs?

2) He *did* change his mind. (Not likely, but still possible) -- LEDGER asks: "Why?" (He and I - as well as Ron Paul and Bill Bennett - agree on some or all of the 2 proposals I put forth: Bankruptcy to cure, and replacing loans with grants - as prevention)

PS: Lower tuition will actually SAVE the goobermint - I mean Government - monies, as less defaults would occur.

The audio/video is probably too large to email as an attachment, but I provided you five (5) links, I implore you to download this in both WMV and MP4 format, and get a statement on Ross as to:

- 1) both the veracity of my audio/video
- 2) The veracity and authenticity of the email replies he kept sending me; and
- 3) A formal statement on whether I quoted him correctly on (A) Bankruptcy and (B) getting government out of business of college loans; and, lastly:
- 4) Does he still hold these views? Why or why not?
- 5) Why has he not acted on his beliefs?
- 6) Say: "Thank you" for being brave enough to publicly admit I was right on both points! (He is either brave or stupid -- but we must thank him here! For making our job easier.)

In a message dated 5/4/2016 3:46:14 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time, Gww1210@aol.com writes:

First off, your view that it should say Ross "once" said this (as opposed to my Ross "recently" said this) is probably a good editorial change: I agree with your assessment that 2-years is an eternity in politics. (And: I understand your using Occam's Razor to cut out the extras... Thank you for your diligence.)

However, did you not read the sources that I cited?

Referring to the 777-word original, which i have cross-posted here <http://gordonwatts.com/BraveRepublicanBreaksRanksWithGOP-HigheEd.html> mirror <http://gordonwaynewatts.com/BraveRepublicanBreaksRanksWithGOP-HigheEd.html> (I have 2 mirrors, one on GoDaddy & one on HostGator), there is source number 2, which states as follows:

"Ross made these statements [2] in a "TeleTownHall" meeting (THM)..."

Scrolling down to the sources, this is what I cite to verify my claims that he said this -- I posted a link to the audio (made into an annotated video) on three (3) mirrors:

- 1) YouTube
- 2) My GoDaddy mirror, GordonWatts.com (in 2 formats: WMV and MP4) -and
- 3) My HostGator mirror, GordonWayneWatts.com (in 2 formats: WMV and MP4) -and

While it is possible to download YouTube vids (with, say, KeepVid.com or similar), it's a real pain, so I've linked these files on my own mirrors.

For the 'good' part, you jump to, I recall, around 7:00 into the vid... and I took the extraordinary step to offer a transcript as well. (Real headache, but I've got to make your job easier.)

One last thing: Since you wonder if he's changed his mind, recently... well, looking at <http://gordonwatts.com/DennisRoss-on-HigherEd/DennisRoss-HigherEd-March-14-a-2016-SCREENSHOT.png> or <http://gordonWAYNEwatts.com/DennisRoss-on-HigherEd/DennisRoss-HigherEd-March-14-a-2016-SCREENSHOT.png> -- but one example of a response Dennis gave me (MAYNY others official replies available in the open directory: <http://gordonwatts.com/DennisRoss-on-HigherEd/> mirrored: <http://gordonWAYNEwatts.com/DennisRoss-on-HigherEd/>), we see that I kept begging Dennis, year after year, term-after-term, to follow through, and he's all talk, and no walk.

At some point, I finally lost my temper, and finally penned a red-hot editorial/guest-op-ed, calling him out for his inaction. Thus, to answer your perennial question: ""Well, he's changed his mind since then," "...," I must say that actions speak louder than words: He absolutely has not changed his mind. (Maybe he ****wants**** to help students, but I feel he fears bankers will either run a candidate against him, or, alternatively, "pull strings," & get him booted from a committee, as happened in his state house tenure.)

In other words, Dennis is waiting on "cover" from the Free Press to act, and represent his "small" constituents. (Also, as FREE colleges used to exist in America - and still does in Germany & other places -- I think that I am being VERY reasonable in my requests: QWith all the fraud here, I think the Goobermint.. I mean, Government & cronies - owe ME...)

Proof: <http://www.politifact.com/florida/statements/2016/feb/09/bernie-s/was-college-once-free-united-states-and-it-oversea/>

Was college once free in United States, as Bernie Sanders says? RATED Mostly True - By Amy Sherman on Tuesday, February 9th, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.

PS: For proof of what Dennis said, and when he said it (*I time-stamped both his Town Hall, as well as numerous "all talk, no walk" letters he sent me...*) see below. Again, the open-source directories -- and Ross' office - both can confirm that he responded to me numerous times -- AND that he said this and has not changed his mind (or maybe he has, but only Ross can speak for himself).

Gordon

[2] Wed. 05-21-2014: U.S. Rep. Dennis A. Ross (R-FL-15) Tele-Town Hall Meeting (with excerpts of 06-18-2014)

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7Z9wWWjTJo> (13:11 length)

"Student Loan and College Debt crisis Town Hall question," by GordonWayneWatts, Published on Jul 13, 2014 – Cached at:

* www.GordonWatts.com/FannyDeregulation/DennisRoss-TeleTHM-Wed21May2014_WMV.wmv

Excerpts: “**ANNOUNCER:** (music) Welcome to the tele-forum conference centre. Please enter your tele-forum ID code, followed by the pound key now. (touch-tones) This tele-forum powered by Broadnet is currently in progress. Please note that this [public tele-TownHall Meeting] call may be monitored, recorded, or rebroadcast..**CONGRESSMAN ROSS:** 'We need leadership...not from behind but [rather] leadership from the front...OK, ah, if you have a question, press star three (*3)...Ah, Gordon in Lakeland.' **GORDON WAYNE WATTS:** 'Hey, how's it going, Dennis?' **DENNIS ROSS:** 'Good, how are you doing?' **GORDON WAYNE WATTS:** 'Before I ask my question, I wanted to remind most of the people who have probably forgotten [how he recognised me from long ago, and made me feel welcome, at one prior Town Hall Meeting, in spite of knowing how hard my THM typically questions are]...[I ask about updates on *unrelated* Immigration free-hotel scams]..' **CONGRESSMAN ROSS:** 'Gordon, I can't tell you right now, but I'm going to have that staff person get back with you. **GORDON WAYNE WATTS:** 'Um hmm... Could I ask another question, real quickly, if I could...I know we've discussed this before, and you were good enough to put up [with my hard questions] and what-not, but... uh, you – you...you could file for bankruptcy, if you went in debt, uh... Donald Trump filed for bankruptcy for Millions...[but] College Students can almost *never* file for bankruptcy. And, you know me – I'm Conservative: I don't want an easy way out. But the Free Market forces,... but the ability to file for bankruptcy in the financial world is like the Second Amendment in the physical world: The [college] student is unable to defend himself – and the Predatory Lending, and inflation of the tuition results. [And the reasons?] The Liberals made the loans easily available. And the so-called 'Conservatives' removed the Bankruptcy Protections, which is [sic: 'are'] the 'Economic Second Amendment'. And, I don't think that it's fair that everyone in the world can file for Bankruptcy, except a College Student. And... and, I want a... I mean, Bankruptcy won't [necessarily] get the person off [out of debt] totally – they'll still have to pay something. But that... that violates, uh... the U.S. Constitution's, uh... prohibition against unequal Bankruptcy Law. [E.g., the U.S. Constitution's uniformity clause, Art. I, Sec. 8, Clause 4.] It's in the U.S. Constitution about, uh, [how] the U.S. Bankruptcy Laws have to be uniform. And this [law] violates that [clause]. And, of course, it's just morally wrong – that *you* could file for bankruptcy, Donald Trump can file for bankruptcy, but I can't. And... and, people are ruined! They [student borrowers] are committing suicide in some cases [over this]. And, I would like you to file a bill that just makes them equal with everyone else. I mean, what... what can you tell me about that? **CONGRESSMAN ROSS:** 'Well, you've recognised a very big problem that we have—and that's having the Government in the business of Student Loans.' **GORDON WAYNE WATTS:** 'Amen.' **CONGRESSMAN ROSS:** 'What we had when I was in school were guarantees by the Federal Government that the money that was actually loaned was from **banks**. It was Private Money that was guaranteed by the Federal Government. The Banks took the initial risk, but they compete...but they competed for my business, and I went to several banks and got the Student Loans. And then I consolidated with Sallie Mae, the student loan mortgage association and eventually paid them off. You know, the other thing that I think [is that] we're being very disingenuous to our students about, uh, is that we're setting them up for failure – not only because of the inability to have any relief, such as setting up a...a Loan Forgiveness to occupations that we need: nurses, doctors, engineers, professions that we desperately need to have in our country – that we could give them a Loan Forgiveness if they commit so much time, uh, in the program for a particular project. But the other thing is, and I've learned this going over and meeting with the Financial Aid director, at the University of South Florida in Tampa, is that we're giving an expectation that you can get as much money, for whatever you need, while you're in school, by way of a loan. And your occupation that you're being trained for

may not ever be able to afford to pay back that loan. You may... you may have \$150,000.00 in loans, but you may have a job that only pays... that will **only** pay a maximum of, let's say, \$35,000.00 per year over you *life*. You can't feasible and reasonably pay for that. We're being disingenuous... Look, I think one of the best investments I ever made in my life was in my Education. There's no question about it: If people want to go [to college] they should have their opportunity to go, but we should make it affordable. And we need to get The Government out of the business of loaning the money, because we're loaning taxpayer dollars. We should invite more Private Capitol, we should make it more competitive, and let the *banks* take the risks : That's what they're in the business of doing! And, if they take the risk, and if a person can't pay back , then we go back to your [prior] Bankruptcy Laws, which, umm... You know, the [current] Bankruptcy Laws right now... If a student does file for Bankruptcy, they can have all other debt discharged—but their Student Loans. So, we're not really doing a good service, either way, uh, by making them over-indebted for their Education. You raise a very good point, and I appreciate that.' **GORDON WAYNE WATTS**: 'Thanks very much, Dennis.' **CONGRESSMAN ROSS**: 'Ah... Star-three' (*3) to participate... Ah, because of our late start, to vote [on a selected topic, via touch-tone], uh, we're only going to take one more question...and, we've got Frank in Mulberry (Florida)...[who asks about promises to seal the border and address Immigration problems – redacted for brevity, but accessible in audio links above]...'

* www.GordonWatts.com/FannyDeregulation/DennisRoss-TeleTHM-Wed21May2014_WMV_mobile-phone-mpeg4.mp4

* GordonWayneWatts.com/FannyDeregulation/DennisRoss-TeleTHM-Wed21May2014_WMV.wmv

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Transcripts at:

www.GordonWatts.com/DennisRoss-on-HigherEd/GordonWayneWatts-navigation-chart-for-documents-DennisRoss-on-HigherEd.html

and:

GordonWayneWatts.com/DennisRoss-on-HigherEd/GordonWayneWatts-navigation-chart-for-documents-DennisRoss-on-HigherEd.html

In a message dated 5/3/2016 5:27:47 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, bill.thompson@theledger.com writes:

Hey Gordon, I got your message and I apologize for taking so long but I went over your op-ed one more time. I had to make some changes because there was much that I didn't think was relevant to your point, and actually would take away from it because it would bog readers down.

For example, Adam Putnam's vote on TARP has nothing to do with Dennis and student loans, as I see it. I also cut the part about his time in the Legislature because that, too, misses the mark. And the Gallup/Princeton polls detract from that as well.

So, one last question: Do you have a tape or video of Dennis making this comment? It's not that I doubt you, but because you write that this is a "recent" shift that he actually said two years ago. I don't want Dennis' office to call me and go, "Well, he's changed his mind since then," or "Those remarks were taken out of context" or "He (meaning you) didn't hear him correctly," something along those lines. And I think if we do proceed, we have to axe "recent" because two years in politics is forever. I think it should say he "once" supported bankruptcy yada yada.

Just let me know when you can. Thanks

On Wed, Apr 27, 2016 at 3:59 PM, <Gww1210@aol.com> wrote:

Bill, this is Gordon.

Your boss, Kevin Drake, was kind enough to speak with me briefly right before a 2:30pm appointment, and I appealed to him about getting either news **AND**/or editorial, and I told him that while you were considering my short, 777-word submission (and trying your best), that you had told me you were backlogged. Moreover, I told him that Lynn Maddox had replied to me that she thought this was editorial and not news.

It's a good thing I called him because while he vaguely remembered my emails (OpEd,

then the one to the lawmakers, Rubio, etc al -- and then my appeal -- below), he did not connect a name & face. However, when I called him, appealing for news & editorial, while he didn't promise a 'yes' or 'no' answer, he did promise to give it a 2nd look and talk with you about it & asked me to email both of you again. (See attachments.)

OK, I know how hard your job it -- I'm a news/editorial guy "just like y'all" -- well, not quite, but close enough for governmental work. -To that end, please see below: When you remove the headers & footers -and the word 'LAKELAND,' my submission is 776-words. (Should you need to "cut it down" more, you can remove the 4 bullet points where I say "good things" about Congressman Dennis Ross, but I'm a Christian, and I feel My Maker telling me to try & [leave that in](#) -- besides, as a practical point, I'm asking Mr. Ross to cosponsor and/or write legislation that might get him booted from a committee, or get the Establishment RINO's angry enough to fund an opponent in the primary and/or the general election, and I get more flies with HONEY than with VINEGAR.

Mr. Drake got off the phone with me right at 2:30pm, but it took me [over an hour](#) to properly format my guest OpEd, *not counting a headache I got over this*, but on the upside, it's properly formatted [right below](#) (inline text of body of this email, which you may "copy and paste" -- I'm not telling you what to do, but if I were you, I'd download the WMV or MP4 files of Ross' Town Hall, to protect your legal back -AND get "his take" on it, inviting him to write a reply to my OpEd.) -- I'm copying Kyle Glenn, Ross' deputy chief of staff because, in all fairness, I should keep them in the loop should they wish to respond with an OpEd. Tho I could't fit it in my OpEd, Ross has -- *for many years* -- been aware of this problem in Higher Ed, politely responding to me ****numerous**** times, as documented in the Raw Data dump, linked in the sources, but failed to act... the natives are becoming restless... [Grrl](#).. -- LASTLY, since I must cite my sources, I've included (in the email attachments of this email) said OpEd - [but with sources](#) - and plenty of them. **The finished product is below. If I can be of assistance, ring my bell.**
Gordon

[OP-ED COLUMN]

Republican Congressman breaks with party, admits college loans deserve bankruptcy:

Rep. Dennis A. Ross, of Lakeland, Fla., bravely admits that college students deserve bankruptcy safety net, like all other loans afford, and affirms the small-government view that we need to "get The Government out of the business of loaning the money," but has yet to introduce or cosponsor legislation to address either problem

By Gordon Wayne Watts, guest OpEd writer

Published: Sunday, May 1, 2016 at 12:01 a.m., Last Modified: Thursday, April 28, 2016 at 11:58 p.m.

LAKELAND— In what may indicate a shift in public opinion on the contentious College Debt issue, Representative Dennis Ross, representing Florida's 15th Congressional district (including Lakeland) admitted in a recent TownHall Meeting that if student borrowers can't repay their loans, we should 'go back' to our prior U.S. Bankruptcy Laws, for, among other reasons, because "we're not really doing a good service, either way...by making them over-indebted for their Education." Ross breaks ranks with the GOP in this candid admission. For example, H.R.1674, the "Private Student Loan Bankruptcy Fairness Act of 2015," a bill by Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN-9th), has 40 cosponsors, all Democrat. Typically most or all cosponsors of such bills are Democrat, but both parties (who have, at times, had complete control of the House, Senate, & Oval Office) are reluctant to allow bankruptcy discharge for college loans like Credit Card users, banks, or the "über-rich" regularly do.

Ross made these statements in a "TeleTownHall" meeting (THM), back on 05-21-2014 (nearly 2 years ago), but has yet to introduce bills offering relief to suffering students. This is troubling because Ross claims to support such legislation, yet hasn't acted on his belief. A review is in order:

(1) While Ross was a state lawmaker, he & Rep. Don Brown of DeFuniak Springs, were the only 2 reps voting against the property insurance bill making Citizens the largest property insurer in Florida. It's believed that they were stripped of their posts as council chairmen by then-Speaker Marco Rubio for voting to protect taxpayers from liability. (2) While, former Rep. Adam Putnam voted for the unpopular T.A.R.P. &

Stimulus bailouts, Ross has only voted for about half the Appropriation bills that "overspend." (3) We remember my infamous 'Heavy Hand' letter to the editor, complaining of Ross blocking people from his social media. However, what most don't know is that his office unblocked me about 12 hours BEFORE my letter published. Since they didn't have a heads up, their unblocking wasn't "reactionary," but rather because Ross & staff have integrity. (He fired a staffer for this overstep.) (4) Moreover, Ross knows he'll receive tough questions from me in THM's, but doesn't shy away from calling on me (as this YouTube vid documents). Thus, Ross has honour & integrity.

As Gallup documents, Congress is only about one level more popular than ISIS, the Taliban, or Al Qaeda, yet the reelection rate is almost 100%: We tend to think highly of our 'own' Congressman. A recent Princeton study finds: "that majorities of the American public actually have little influence over the policies our government adopts" —and: "even overwhelmingly large pro-change majorities, with 80 percent of the public favoring a policy change, got that change only about 43 percent of the time."

Even Ross, whose record is above average (pro-life, 2nd amendment supporter, once rated "most conservative" congressman), has been described as a 'RINO' by Conservative Review. He admits College Loans deserve bankruptcy, but has yet to introduce or cosponsor such legislation. Does he only represent the rich?

Not only would bankruptcy (and other standard consumer protections, like truth in lending, refinancing, & statutes of limitations) help struggling borrowers, but they'd scare off lenders, resulting in sharp declines in tuition. Therefore:

First, please cosponsor bills like H.R.3451, the Student Loan Bankruptcy Parity Act of 2015. (Actually, make college loans equal to Credit Card loans, which have ALL std consumer protections.)

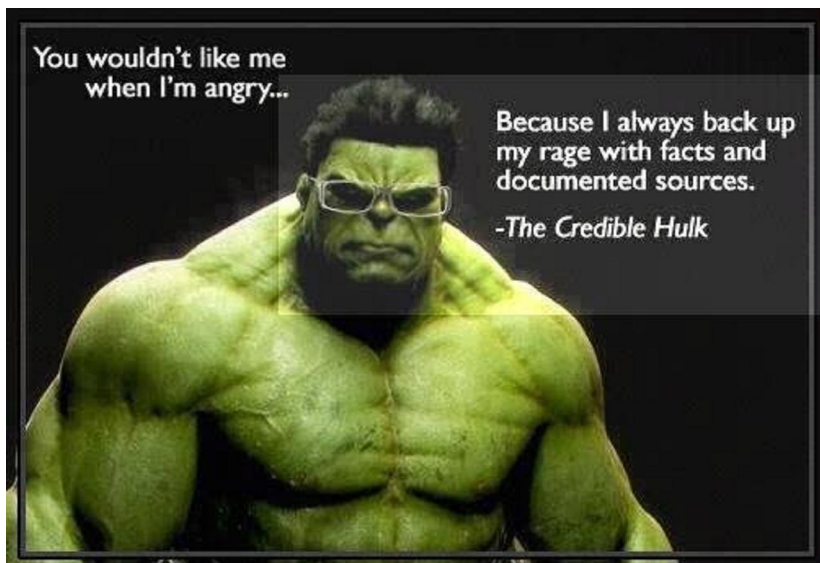
Ross also said that we needed to "get The Government out of the business of loaning the money" However, he has yet to introduce a bill that does this. So, please end ALL HigherEd Loans: American colleges in the 50's & 60's were the best in the world WITHOUT need for loans: We can do without loans today. Many experts (Ron Paul & former Secretary of Ed, Bill Bennett) agree we shouldn't even have College Loans in the first place: When Universities see subsidies, they increase tuition simply to pay for million-dollar salaries!

This costs students (skyrocketing tuition) and taxpayers (who back these loans).

Students are told from their youth that they need an education to compete in today's world; let's not punish them forever for doing what is right. So, I ask Congressman Ross to introduce legislation that represents the 99%, not the rich 1%—legislation that simply makes College Loans 'equal' in all respects to 'Credit Card' loans, and then once that is done, end this wicked college loan system: We never needed it in the past, and we need to end this new form of debt slavery: Slavery was wrong in the past—and it's wrong now. It must stop.

[Gordon Watts (gww1210@aol.com) is a Lakeland resident, one-time candidate for state house , and part-time advocate. He almost won on behalf of Terri Schiavo , all by himself, in state court, and, more recently, was believed to be the only NonLawyer that a Federal Appeals court allowed to participate in the recent spate of 'Gay Marriage' cases. Watts is currently asking the US Supreme Court to strike the law in question. His blog is accessible at GordonWatts.com and GordonWayneWatts.com.]

PS - to see my sources, Bill, see the email attachments in this email, 2 of which have said sources, and 3 of which have a print-ready finished product. -- Additionally, a headshot file photo of myself (and a copy of the funny Meme, below, are also included in this emai) should they be useful.



In a message dated 4/25/2016 9:46:45 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, Gww1210@aol.com writes:

Thank you for replying, John.

You are correct - and thank you for speaking with me the other day: You did indeed tell me that your regular 'beat' was not Higher Ed, & that u were subbing for Rick that one day. (You did your job quite well!)

Additionally, I have spoken with both Lynn Maddox, the news editor, and Bill Thompson, the editorials/letters editor, and here is what I have to report (and I'm copying them so that we're "on the same page").

First off, Lynn was kind enough to take time out of a busy "close to 5pm" day to speak with me earlier this evening, and she was professional & polite -but firm: Dennis Ross' foot in mouth admission on 2 key 'Higher Ed' points (*bankruptcy and lending caps - see the email attachment for the typo-correct 777-word guest OpEd submission*) & Dennis Ross' subsequent **lack of legislative action to back it up** was **not** news. She suggested a letter to the editor. (Note: I anticipated this last week, and beat her to the punch, but nothing has resulted yet. I do, *for the record*, have a request in for my 777-word guest OpEd-and a corrected version is attached to my email here, correcting a minor typo.)

Also, about 1-2 weeks ago (after I wrote it on the 13th), I spoke with Bill Thompson. He was likewise responsive & genuine, but he informed me of a **"huge"** backlog of submissions of this type, and responded to my "length" query that 700-words was usually the upper limit, unless either my OpEd or others' stuff was cut. (I think 777-words will 'fit' - trust me on that!)

The *Tampa Tribune* no longer gives news "coverage" to Ross' district, as they have **hugely** shrunk their coverage area, but their letters editor said he might consider a small letter, given the *Tribune* still sells in Lakeland stores. (Good luck here: The Trib said that this was a '*Ledger*' issue. And: I will add that *The Ledger* has had 'cutbacks,' too, and I suspect said 'cutbacks' were because *The Ledger* gives coverage 'big' people too much, & 'little' people too little, giving it a 'paparazzi' image to the readership, pushing people to alternative media sources, online & elsewhere.)

Of the 3 entities that are still "in the mix" (the good Congressman, your news side, and your editorial side), all parties are "trying," I trust, but given that I'm just a little "nobody," my feeling is **that everybody's "waiting" for "everybody else" to do something - and, like the toad frog in the slowly-heated water, "nobody" does anything!** (Given that College debt has surpassed Credit Card debt for the first time in the history of mankind - and given the oppressively Predatory Lending that has resulted from both Democrats and Republicans representing **"only"** the "1%" (read: banks), Americans anymore are either uneducated (read: McD burger flippers) or, should they chose to go to college, so indebted that even 700-years in the Jesus' Millennium Reign they (we) will still be indebted debt slaves, which carry with it many problems (ruined credit, difficulty getting jobs, and, in some states, loss of drivers' licenses, professional licenses - and yeah, kicking us while we are down is the way to solve the problems - and now a documented SPIKE in suicides directly related to college loan debt -- America's the greatest nation in the world because the Free Press has been doing its job to keep elected officials in line.... not.)

Higher Ed (once **FREE** in America - and the **BEST** Higher Ed system in the free world!) is the "backbone of America" -- but **anymore** nowadays, we clearly have a "broken back" - Proof: "Was college once free in United States, as Bernie Sanders says?," By Amy Sherman, **PolitiFact**, Tue Feb 9, 2016 at 4:00 p.m: RATED "Mostly True" <http://www.politifact.com/florida/statements/2016/feb/09/bernie-s/was-college-once-free-united-states-and-it-oversea/> **If it was free (or low cost) then - and yet GREAT, why can't we do that now?**

Anyhow, I sometimes feel like the only way to get news coverage is to go out and kill someone -- or become a multi-billionaire -but, since I'm not a murderer, nor am I rich, both of these avenues are not reasonable. I'm in "catch-22" right now, & wonder what, if anything, I can do other than hope on a miracle. *Thoughts? Feedback?*

Gordon//

In a message dated 4/25/2016 5:25:59 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, john.ceballos@theledger.com writes:

Hey Gordon, this is John Ceballos with The Ledger.

Just wanted to let you know I received your email and that Lenore forwarded me a voicemail you left her.

I don't remember if I conveyed this in our conversation last week, but my main beat/focus at The Ledger is business/consumer news. (I only wrote about the Dennis Ross town hall because our political reporter Rick Rousos couldn't cover two events at once, and I was happy to pinch hit.)

Either way, I wanted to let you know that I received your material and

I'll take a look. However, I also have to tell you that we've got a good amount of other stories we're working on and I'm sure you understand my assigned beat is my priority. Anyway, if we DO decide to do something with the material you shared, I'll be in touch.

Thank you very much for reading and writing in.

On Fri, Apr 15, 2016 at 3:12 PM, <Gww1210@aol.com> wrote:

To: Caleb Orr, Policy staffer: https://twitter.com/_caleborr

Cc: Eduardo F. Sacasa, Legislative Correspondent

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), 284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510, Phone: 202-224-3041

Cc: Taleen G. Mekhdjavian, Legislative Correspondent

c/o: Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL), 716 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510, Phone: 202-224-5274

Cc: Kyle Glenn, Deputy Chief of Staff: <http://dennisross.house.gov/contact/officeinformation.htm>

c/o: Rep. Dennis A. Ross (R-FL-15th), 229 Cannon HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515

Phone: (202) 225-1252, Hours: Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Orr:

Surely you remember the Sesame Street classic skit, "Schoolhouse Rock- How a Bill Becomes a Law": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Otbml6WlQPo> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nKyihov9z8> or even at: <https://www.schooltube.com/video/fcde4d15a9276c9a09d3/>

Anyhow, along those lines, I have asked my US Congressman, Dennis Ross, to file legislation that remedies the horrible predatory lending and resultant skyrocketing college tuition, resultant college debt, and related illegal monopolies and violations of several Constitutional provisions (which are described more in the attached briefs, which I've filed, before the US Supreme Court).

The two remedies I propose are as follows:

- 1) Restore all standard consumer protections to college loans (including, but not limited to bankruptcy).
- 2) Get the Federal Government (taxpayer dollars) out of higher ed loans in the first place (and, concurrently, replace some of it with grants and NOT loans).

As I explain in the 777-word OpEd in **this email attachment**, we did just fine without college loans in the past (and America had the BEST Higher Education in the WORLD). If we could provide affordable higher education then - and without loans, we can do it now.

The 2nd solution is preventative in nature (stopping government monies from being used as subsidies), but for those students who were victimised by predatory lending, Bankruptcy and other remedies are needed. (Income Based Repayment is not enough to scare off lenders from predatory lending).

I have published my OpEd all over all of my social media, and *The Lakeland Ledger* is considering publishing it as well, as I speak. (I'm copying the *Tampa Tribune*, who I hope sees the problems that lawmakers have caused by avoiding Free Market principles, and - maybe - offer Free Press backing to remind lawmakers that they represent us - "We the People," not the rich and powerful.)

Surprisingly, Republicans, such as Ross & Rubio, have claimed to adhere to Free Market checks (such as bankruptcy, a check/balance against predatory lending), as I document in my

OpEd, but the legislative branch has lost all honour and credibility. Senator Rubio, who claims to have our backs, is almost out of time, and congressman Ross is being challenged by a conservative Democrat, who, due to the new eastern-Hillsborough County district area of the 15th Federal District, will have an uphill battle to be reelected, especially given the large number of college students in our district.

Surprisingly, Democrats have been more amenable to Free Market solutions in re higher ed (this troubles me as a Republican!), so, my "gut feeling" is that Sen. Bill Nelson, whom I'm copying in my email, will be amenable to the 2 pieces of legislation I propose.

The OpEd in question is also in this email attachment, as selected filings before the US Supreme Court and one court of appeal. The nation's high court is liberal and activist, and I don't foresee any relief from them any time soon, so I'd appreciate it if you can pass these 2 pieces of legislation and finally rid American of the Debt Slavery scourge!

Gordon Wayne Watts, editor-in-chief, The Register

www.GordonWayneWatts.com / www.GordonWatts.com
BS, The Florida State University, Biological & Chemical Sciences;
Class of 2000, double major with honours
AS, United Electronics Institute, Class of 1988, Valedictorian
821 Alicia Road, Lakeland, FL 33801-2113
Home:(863)688-9880 Work: (863)686-3411 Voice&FAX:
(863)687-6141 Cell:(863)409-2109
See also: http://Gordon_Watts.Tripod.com/consumer.html

Gww1210@aol.com ; Gww12102002@Yahoo.com
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Get Truth

"First, they [Nazis] came for the Jews. I was silent. I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists. I was silent. I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists. I was silent. I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me. There was no one left to speak for me."(Martin Niemöller, given credit for a quotation in The Harper Religious and Inspirational Quotation Companion, ed. Margaret Pepper(New York: Harper &Row, 1989), 429 -as cited on page 44, note 17,of Religious Cleansing in the American Republic, by Keith A. Forni, Copyright 1993, by Liberty, Life, and Family Publications.

Some versions have Mr. Niemöller saying: "Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up, because I was a Protestant"; other versions have him saying that they came for Socialists, Industrialists, schools, the press, and/or the Church; however, it's certain he DID say SOMETHING like this. Actually, they may not have come for the Jews first, as it's more likely they came for the prisoners, mentally handicapped, & other so-called "inferiors" first -as historians tell us-so they could get "practiced up"; however, they did come for them -due to the silence of their neighbors -and due in part to their own silence. So: 'Speak up now or forever hold your peace!'"-GWW

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John Ceballos
Reporter, The Ledger
863-802-7515 (office) 813-446-9127 (mobile)
john.ceballos@theledger.com

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*Bill Thompson
Editorial Page Editor
Lakeland Ledger*

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*Bill Thompson
Editorial Page Editor
Lakeland Ledger*

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3 attachments

 **GuestOpEdCOLUMN-TheLedger.htm**
10K

 **GuestOpEdCOLUMN-TheLedger.html**
10K

 **GuestOpEdCOLUMN-TheLedger.pdf**
98K