

Event



Thursday, November 14, 2019 | 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM ET

Is There a Conservative Case for Mass Student Debt Forgiveness? A Conversation with A. Wayne Johnson, Former Head of US Department of Education Office of Federal Student Aid

With Jason D. Delisle | Nat Malkus

[Higher Education](#)

AEI, Auditorium
1789 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20036

[Contact Information](#)

In October, A. Wayne Johnson — one of the Trump administration's senior student loan officials — announced his resignation, calling the federal student loan system "fundamentally broken." He then proposed that the government forgive most outstanding student debt and terminate the student loan program.

Although there are few details about Dr. Johnson's plan, many wonder if this is a turning point in the debate about student debt. Some see his plan as an emerging conservative case for loan forgiveness, but others view it as out of step with core principles.

On November 14, join AEI for a conversation between Dr. Johnson and Jason D. Delisle on the details of Dr. Johnson's proposal, how he plans to finance it, and if there is a bipartisan case for forgiving student debt.

Join the conversation on social media with [#CancelStudentDebt](#).

Event Summary

On Thursday, AEI's Jason D. Delisle interviewed A. Wayne Johnson, a former senior student loan official in the Trump administration. During the discussion, Mr. Delisle questioned Dr. Johnson on whether there is a conservative case to be made for mass student debt cancellation.

Calling the current federal student loan system "unorthodox," Dr. Johnson speculated that the majority of loan disbursements will never actually be collected. Accordingly, he proposes canceling up to \$50,000 in student debt per borrower and establishing a \$50,000 line of credit for new college students. He also unveiled several new components to his plan, which might include a federal income share agreement, and would finance the plan through a 1 percent tax on corporation top-line revenues.

He describes the plan as a "conservative alternative" to Democratic proposals like those forwarded by Sen. Bernie Sanders and Sen. Elizabeth Warren, since his plan would terminate the federal loan program and would allow the newly established grant to be used at public and private institutions alike. While some certainly left the room unpersuaded that this is a conservative proposal, Dr. Johnson plans to continue making the case for mass student debt cancellation.

— Cody Christensen and Warner Radliff

A. Wayne Johnson: Is there a conservative case for mass student debt forgiveness? | LIVE ST...



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Agenda

1:45 PM

Registration

2:00 PM

Welcome and introduction:

Nat Malkus, AEI

2:05 PM

Conversation:

Jason D. Delisle, AEI

A. Wayne Johnson, US Department of Education Office of Federal Student Aid (former)

2:35 PM

Q&A

Upcoming Events

January 17, 2024



12:00 PM to 1:30 PM ET

In-Person Event

AEI Election Watch 2024: The Primaries Begin

With Chris Stirewalt | John C. Fortier | Sean Trende

Elections
Politics and Public Opinion
Society and Culture

January 18, 2024



12:30 PM to 1:30 PM ET

In-Person Event

Intellectual Property and Biopharmaceuticals: Implications of Changes in US Protections for Clinical Data and Technology

With Kirsten Axelsen | Susan G. Braden | Paul R. Michel | Adam Mossoff

Economics Health Policy

January 19, 2024



10:00 AM to 11:30 AM ET

In-Person Event

The Imperiled Future of Big-City Mass Transit

With Howard Husock
Opportunity and Social Mobility
Transportation Urban Policy

January 24, 2024



1:15 PM to 2:45 PM ET

Online Event

Soft Landing, Hard Landing, or Financial Crisis?

With Steven B. Kamin | Desmond Lachman

Economics
International Economics
Monetary Economics

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