

President Trump unveils 2021 budget with massive cuts to assistance programs

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By Sara Avery | Hampton University Staff Writer

President Trump unveiled his 2021 budget that makes major cuts to safety net programs like Social Security and food stamps. The \$4.8 trillion proposal also will affect certain federal student loan programs, increasing the amount of debt that borrowers will have over their lifetime, USA Today reported.

A program that forgives the remaining student debt of public service workers, such as teachers and firefighters, who have made on time payments for 10 years, will be terminated. This could result in over \$52 billion worth of additional payments in the next decade.

The budget also would terminate government payments on the subsidies of Stafford loans. These subsidies are the interest the government pays on loans while students are in school. This could result in \$18 billion more for borrowers over the next decade.

Additionally, a grant that helped 1.7 million students in 2019 will be axed. The Trump administration believes that the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant replicates the Pell Grant, which helped 8.2 million students in 2019, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

"I believe that Trump's new budget plan is making it impossible for families with harder financial circumstances to send their children to college," HU sophomore Daelin Brown said.

Another change being made is the limit placed on how much parents of undergraduates can borrow from the federal government with the Parent PLUS loan. Currently, parents can borrow the full annual cost of attendance minus other financial aid their student receives per year. Under the 2021 budget, that would be restricted to only \$26,500 to pay for their student's entire undergraduate education.

"That's totally reasonable," Sandy Baum, a fellow in the Center for Education, Data and Policy at the Urban Institute, told USA Today. "There's no reason why the federal government should lend such large amounts of money to parents who may have their lives ruined by it because they can't afford to repay it."

The budget also will include modifications of Social Security and Medicaid, even after the president promised several times during campaigning that he would not touch it. The budget plans to cut around \$45 billion on Social Security Supplemental Income, a program aimed at helping disabled children and adults. It also plans to cut \$844 billion in Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act over the next 10 years.

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