

# Features

## Budget cuts to affect middle income students

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — Ronald Reagan's proposed cuts in aid to college students are going to be felt mostly by the traditionally Democratic middle-income and working class Americans who were a key to his winning the White House.

Reagan is cutting federal aid to higher education as part of his plan to trim almost \$50 billion next year. The programs getting axed are the ones that have made a col-

lege education an accepted norm for most middle-class families and many in the lower-middle-class. The president would make it more difficult for children of middle-income families to get federally subsidized low-interest loans, a program that has grown out of control because anyone — even the wealthy — may participate. Many upper-income families have taken out the loans and used them for investments.

Eligibility for grants, which go to lower-income children, would be tightened also, but nowhere as much as the loans, the administration says. Also, there will be added emphasis on collecting the hundreds of millions of dollars in defaulted payments owned the government.

Meanwhile, while Congress decides what to do about Reagan's budget proposals, the administration has ordered a halt to processing grant application for next year. Rep. J.J. Pickle, D-Texas, who chairs the House Social Security subcommittee that has jurisdiction over the matter, says Congress won't eliminate the benefits

outright. But he does seem resigned to their phase-out. The administration argues the benefits are unfair since, in effect, 18-to-22-year-old workers who pay Social Security taxes are financing the college costs of people their own age who are going to school. Critics of the Reagan plan, like Sen. Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., say cutting college aid is "penny-wise and pound foolish" because in the

"We're belt-tightening; we're not emasculating," he said. "The cuts won't be very large. What they will do is hold down the growth. If we didn't do what we are proposing, the numbers would be much higher. The government must gain control of exploding federal spending."

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**The poor will bear some of the burden of the higher education cuts, but the heavy load will be carried by middle- and lower-middle-class families who have come to depend on federal aid for sending their children to college.**

long-run the drop they see coming in the number of students will mean fewer highly trained people in the economy. "Students must not be the sacrificial lambs of the budget-cutting process," says Rep. Peter Peyser, D-N.Y. "It is not only the poor, but the middle-income families and their children who desperately need this continuing help."

Bell claims there will still be an increase in the number of federally subsidized loans from 2.8 million this year to 3.1 million in 1982. He said without the changes the program would have 4.5 million participants. "But the size of these loans (because of the changes) won't be of the magnitude they have been," Bell says. Additionally, about 800,000 other students age 18-22 receive an average monthly payment of \$229 from Social Security benefits because their parents are either dead, disabled or retired.

Bell says Reagan wants to "sharpen the focus" of the federal programs "upon truly needy students." But college administrators, students, and sympathetic members of Congress claim the changes will drive hundreds of thousands of people from college for lack of money and may force some small private schools out of business. "This will not drive millions of students away from higher education," Bell insists, but he concedes it will change the status quo for huge numbers of them. College lobbyists say up to 750,000 students could be forced to drop out of school. Sixty percent of college students depend on

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