



CBCF EXECUTIVE ORDER TRACKER

Restoring Public Service Loan Forgiveness

Executive Order #14235

Date Issued: March 7, 2025

Topic: Education, Economic Opportunity

WHAT DOES THIS EXECUTIVE ORDER DO?

- Congress established the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program (PSLF) [in 2007](#) to incentivize highly skilled workers to take jobs in the public sector. After ten years of student loan payments, the program forgives the remaining loan balances for employees of government agencies and many nonprofits.
- This order amends the eligibility criteria for the PSLF to exclude organizations that engage in “improper” or illegal activity.
- The order targets “activist organizations” that engage in “illegal discrimination,” including diversity, equity, and inclusion work. The order also alludes to removing organizations that participate in civil disobedience or protests from PSLF eligibility, citing organizations that violate laws against disorderly conduct and obstruction of highways.
- The order also singles out organizations that support immigrants of all legal statuses, stating that those that “support terrorism,” including cartels, and those that are “aiding or abetting violations of Federal immigration laws” do not qualify for PSLF. The order specifically cites 8 U.S.C. 1325, a law stating that [unlawful entry](#) into the United States is a misdemeanor offense.
- The order refers to organizations that assist transgender children in accessing gender-affirming care as engaging in child abuse and moves to exclude their employees from the PSLF program.



HOW WILL THIS EXECUTIVE ORDER BE ENFORCED?

- This order would amend federal regulations to stipulate that the definition of “public service” under PSLF excludes organizations that “engage in activities that have a substantial illegal purpose.” [Experts](#) anticipate that this change will not take effect for at least one year.
- The order will be enforced by the Secretary of Education, who was instructed to revise the code. The order permits the Secretary of Education to coordinate with the Secretary of the Treasury where appropriate to propose revisions to the financial components of the program.





HOW DOES THIS IMPACT BLACK COMMUNITIES?

- This order has significant implications for the more than 8 million Black borrowers who currently have student loan debt. Black people are historically overrepresented in the federal workforce. In 2020, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that nearly 20% of public sector workers were Black. The PSLF program was designed to reward public sector employees for their service to the country by alleviating any remaining student loan debt after 120 payments. This executive order punishes public servants who work for organizations that don't align with President Trump's policy positions and will have a deleterious effect on Black Americans for years to come.
- Black students are both more likely to take out loans and leave college with more debt than their white peers. This gap only worsens over time. A study from the Brookings Institution found that the Black-white disparity in student loan debt more than triples four years after graduation. The long-term effects of student loan debt contribute to the racial wealth gap and can create negative economic and psychological outcomes for Black Americans. Student debt can delay retirement for Black workers, and high interest rates can balloon costs, which is associated with higher rates of depression and anxiety. By narrowing the eligibility criteria for the PLSF program, the Trump Administration has saddled a generation of Black public servants with a greater financial burden.



HOW ARE CBC MEMBERS RESPONDING?

- The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to advancing equity in education, specifically related to student loan forgiveness. In 2022, the CBC released the following statement praising former President Joe Biden's [student debt forgiveness plan](#).
 - "The Congressional Black Caucus has remained at the forefront of the fight for student loan forgiveness, regularly meeting with the President and his executive team to ensure this issue remains a priority. The Biden Administration's Student Loan Debt Plan will provide much-needed relief to Black borrowers. [...] The burden of student loan debt has disproportionately impacted Black borrowers for far too long, leaving many stuck with thousands of dollars of debt, hindering their abilities to plan for the future and build intergenerational wealth. [...] The Congressional Black Caucus remains committed to achieving additional reforms to ensure current, and future borrowers are not subjected to this cycle of burdensome debt, and we thank the Biden Administration for delivering this victory for so many families." [Full Statement](#)
- To read more about the CBC's legacy on education policy issues, visit [Avoice](#), our virtual library.