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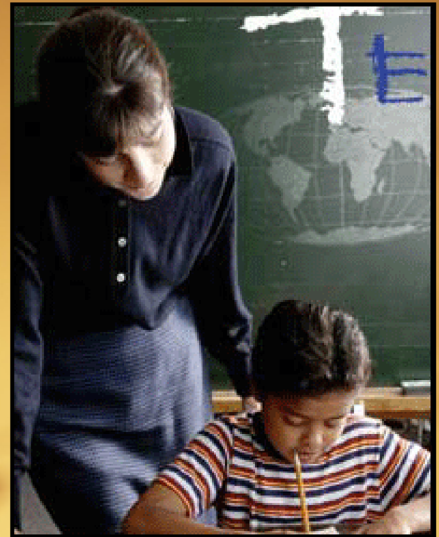

Paying Back, Not Giving Back

Student Debt's Negative Impact on Public Service Career Opportunities

CALPIRG
Education Fund

Paying Back, Not Giving Back:

Student Debt's Negative Impact on Public Service Career Opportunities

April 2006

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State PIRGs' Higher Education Project: www.pirg.org/highered
Student Debt Alert: www.studentdebtalert.org

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

American colleges and universities play a pivotal role in training the nation's citizens, leaders, innovators, public servants and educators. In today's economy, a college education is more desirable than ever before – millions of high school students strive for its promise and the benefits it brings for both the individual and society.

In the past decade, government support for higher education has declined; as a result, tuition and fees have increased. Grants have failed to keep pace. As costs continue to swell, students are taking on more and more debt to pay for their degrees. Two-thirds of all four-year college graduates in 2004 left school with student debt, compared with less than one-third in 1993.

Recent graduates, especially those with low and moderate incomes, must spend the vast majority of their salaries on necessities such as rent, health care, and food. For borrowers struggling to cover basic costs, student loan repayment can create a significant and measurable impact on their lives. This report focuses on such "burdensome" or "unmanageable" debt. Last fall, two economists, Sandy Baum and Saul Schwarz, published a report proposing a new graduated benchmark system for estimating burdensome student debt. They posit that recent graduates with very low salaries—about half of the median individual income in the U.S.—cannot manageably repay their student loan debt while meeting their other needs. Graduates with incomes above this minimum threshold can manageably pay no more than a certain percentage of their income on their student loan debt. Their formula takes into account the fact that recent graduates with low incomes experience financial constraints at lower debt levels than their higher earning peers.

This report looks at the issue of unmanageable debt as it pertains to college graduates entering two critical public service careers: teaching and social work. Given increasing dependence on student loans, borrowers graduating from four-year schools and working in these two public service careers often carry more debt than they can manage. The prospect of burdensome debt likely deters skilled and dedicated college graduates from entering and staying in important careers educating our nation's children and helping the country's most vulnerable populations.

In order to demonstrate the impact of student loan debt on public servants, we looked at average starting salaries of teachers and social workers nationally and by state and estimated what percentage of these new public servants would carry unmanageable student loan debt. "Unmanageable" means that their loan payments would have a measurable and burdensome impact on their lives and would likely hinder their ability to pay for basic necessities.

Factoring in high debt levels, the congressional fixed 6.8% interest rate for federal student loans, and low starting salaries, we found that 23% of public four-year college students graduate with too much debt to manageably repay their loans as a starting teacher. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of public four-year college graduates have too much debt to manage as a starting social worker.

Graduates of private four-year colleges face even more significant debt burdens. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of private four-year college students would face an unmanageable debt burden as a starting teacher. Fifty-five percent (55%) of private college graduates would face serious

repayment challenges as a starting social worker.
The situation detailed in this report does not belong to any one state or any one profession. The jobs profiled serve as a bellwether. As students increasingly finance college through loans, debt has become a national issue with serious policy implications that demands a national solution.

Graduates of public and private universities who want to become teachers may encounter greater financial obstacles in some states than others, given the average starting teacher salary and cost of living. The ten states in which the highest percentage of college graduates would face unmanageable debt as a starting teacher include New Hampshire, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Vermont, Utah, Maine, South Dakota, Montana, Connecticut, and Minnesota (Table ES-1).

Table ES-1. Ten States with the Highest Percentage of Students Facing Unmanageable Debt as a Starting Teacher

State	Percentage of public 4-year graduates with debt exceeding manageable levels if they took teaching jobs in this state	Percentage of private 4-year graduates with debt exceeding manageable levels if they took teaching jobs in this state
New Hampshire	54.1	67.4
Wisconsin	50.3	64.1
North Dakota	46.0	60.9
Vermont	46.0	60.6
Utah	39.3	56.0
Maine	39.3	55.9
South Dakota	38.4	55.3
Montana	37.4	54.8
Connecticut	36.4	54.0
Minnesota	36.1	53.5

Sources: 2004 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS); American Federation of Teachers Survey and Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends

Having such a high percentage of students facing burdensome debt has consequences both for specific professions of high social value and the entire economy. To solve this problem and ensure that higher education remains within reach for all Americans, we need to increase need-based grant aid; make loan repayment fair and affordable; protect borrowers from usurious lending practices; and provide incentives for state governments and colleges to control tuition costs.

VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education continues to be a great investment for American citizens and our nation as a whole. The Department of Education has found that a college degree is worth 75% more than a high school diploma or more than $1,000,000 in earnings over a lifetime in the workforce.[1] The labor market is growing increasingly global and reliant on knowledge-based jobs that require a college degree. A more educated populace has lower health care costs and contributes more to the tax base. Just as citizens have an interest in a system of accessible and affordable higher education, so too does business and government.

Given the overwhelming benefits of higher education to individual earnings and for our economy, it is tempting to restrict our thinking about education to such outcomes. To do so would be shortsighted. American higher education is also an essential part of our democratic system, the place where we scrutinize values and keep vigorous our nation's quest for equality and freedom. The Higher Education Act of 1965 that created the federal student loan programs was itself a product of the civil rights movement. President Johnson declared that the result of this legislation was that "a high school senior anywhere in this great land of ours can apply to any college or any university in any of the 50 States and not be turned away because his family is poor."[2] The benefit to our democracy is not theoretical; the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement found that young Americans who did not attend college have consistently voted at levels below college-attending youth in both presidential and midterm election years.[3]

STUDENT DEBT BURDEN IS ON THE RISE

Despite the individual, economic and social benefits of higher education, individual students are shouldering an increasing share of the costs. Over the past two decades, undergraduate student loans have supplanted grant aid as the primary way students finance their college education. In 1999-2000, the average student loan debt for a full-time student at a four-year institution was $16,928, up from $9,188 in 1992-1993.[4] An increased reliance on student loans has resulted in a growing number of indebted graduates entering the workforce. In 2004, two-thirds of all four-year college graduates left school with student debt, compared with less than one-third in 1993.[5]

Rising student debt threatens access to higher education as well as attempts to keep college affordable. Scholarship on this issue suggests some students are "debt averse" and are unwilling to take out even modest student loans to pay for college.[6] As a result, these young people sometimes avoid college all together. Experts on student debt and college access call for further research to determine the breadth and impact of this issue on Americans hoping to attend college.

While the effect of student debt on access is still being investigated, the impact of high loan debt on college affordability is well documented. Student loan debt can limit post-collegiate career options, delay the purchase of large items like a home or a car, or discourage borrowers from starting a family. In the most extreme cases, burdensome debt can cause some students to default, resulting in wage garnishment and ruined credit. Recent changes in federal bankruptcy

law and a decision by the Supreme Court have made student loan debt almost impossible to discharge.

Debt burden is determined by three factors: salary, total debt, and loan repayment terms including interest rate and years of repayment. A borrower's monthly payment is determined by the size of the loan and the interest rate for that loan and years of repayment. For example, a graduate with $20,000 in loans, repaying those loans over 10 years at a 6.8% interest rate, would pay $230 a month. The same $20,000 loan repaid over 10 years at a 3.4% interest rate would cost $197 a month. In this scenario, the interest rate alone accounts for a difference of $33 per month, or $4,000 in additional payments over the life of the loan. The third important variable in analyzing the impact of loan debt is salary, as a $230 monthly loan payment is a much greater burden for someone with a yearly salary of $20,000 than for someone earning $60,000.

In the spring of 2005, the Department of Education analyzed the change in undergraduate student debt during the last decade and published a report entitled *Debt Burden: A Comparison of 1992–93 and 1999–2000 Bachelor's Degree Recipients a Year After Graduating*.[7] The study, based on data from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) as well as follow-up analysis of students during their first year of repayment, found more undergraduates taking out Stafford loans (the primary source of student loans) to pay for college and a significant increase in the median debt level. The report also found, however, that the average debt burden for students increased less rapidly than overall borrowing. The Department of Education concluded that three factors allowed students to manage the significant increase in undergraduate student debt during the nineties: a robust job market, low interest rates for new loans and the ability to consolidate student loans at a fixed rate. As a result, although overall debt increased, graduates generally had more income and were paying less interest on their loans, meaning they devoted only slightly more of their salary to student loans in 2000 than they had in 1993.

In the one year since the publication of *Debt Burden*, interest rates have risen significantly and the fixed rate consolidation benefit has been ended, but the job market has remained constant. In 2000, students faced low interest rates and lower projected rates over the successive years; interest rates ultimately hit their historic low of 3.34% in the summer of 2004. Starting July 1, 2006, interest rates on Stafford loans, the main source of federal student loans, will move to a fixed interest rate of 6.8%. While interest rates have been higher before, 6.8% represents a significant jump from recent years. The fixed 6.8% rate will likely protect some students from higher interest rates in the future, but students will be unable to count on low interest rates to help them reduce their debt burden or benefit when market rates drop below 6.8%.

Over the past several years, as interest rates have dipped, students with multiple loans have been able to consolidate all of their loans and lock in a fixed interest rate. By moving all loans to a fixed rate, Congress has stopped students from locking in lower rates in the future.

The job market is in 2006 is comparable to or marginally weaker than in 2000, when the students in *Debt Burden* were surveyed and entered the workforce. Federal unemployment in the fall of 2000 was around 4%, while at the beginning of 2006 it was just below 5%.[8] Higher interest rates and a comparable job market mean that future graduates will have a harder time repaying debt

considered manageable in 2000. Because college costs continue to rise as well as overall borrowing levels, students will have to cope with larger loans as well.

Given these new conditions, now is a critical time to reassess the impact of student debt on college affordability. This report looks at one particular impact of rising student debt: how the combination of large loans and low salaries can pose a challenge for students interested in entering a public service career, such as teaching or social work.

PUBLIC SERVICE AND STUDENT DEBT

The reasons to compare undergraduate student debt with starting public service salaries are twofold. First, teachers and social workers play a critical role in American society and are essential to the functioning of local communities. Over the next decade, America will need to recruit two million new teachers to fill our nation's classrooms.[9] Assuming that prospective teachers are representative of the broader student population, in which two-thirds of graduates now have student loans, it is reasonable to expect an increasing number of new teachers will have student loan debt. The same holds true for social workers, who will continue to play a critical role as our population ages and requires more support services. Increased dependence on student loans could pose a challenge to states' and local governments' efforts to recruit and retain talented teachers and social workers.

Congress seems to understand the potential effect of loan debt on teacher recruitment and retention. In the fall of 2004, Congress passed the Taxpayer-Teacher Act of 2004, which ended an excessive subsidy to private lenders and used the savings to increase loan forgiveness for math, science and language teachers with five years of tenure in low-income schools.[10] This legislation rewards some teachers for their good service teaching critical subjects under difficult conditions. However, the legislation does not address the larger problem of how to recruit two million college graduates into this low-paying career when many must begin making large loan payments only two months into their first semester of teaching.

The second reason to look at starting salaries and loan debt is more theoretical. Teachers and social workers are representative of a whole sector of low-paying but socially valuable careers that a graduating senior might choose, such as non-profit community work, journalism, the ministry, or art. These professions are all critical for a strong and flourishing nation. The government should provide students the opportunity to pursue their interests and apply their skills even in fields that have low salaries. In this sense, teachers and social workers are emblematic of an entire spectrum of professions and job choices that students with high loan debt may not be able to pursue. Because students with lower incomes are more dependent on student loans than higher income students, students who already face significant challenges to attending college will more strongly feel the effect of loan debt on career choice.[11]

KEY FINDINGS

This report examines the student debt of recent college graduates compared with starting salaries for two public service careers. Specifically, we look at undergraduate student debt for 2003-2004 college graduates and starting salaries for teachers and social workers.

Last fall, two economists, Sandy Baum and Saul Schwarz, published a report proposing a new graduated benchmark system for estimating burdensome student debt. They posit that recent graduates with very low salaries—about half of the median U.S. income—cannot manageably repay their student loan debt while meeting their other needs. Graduates with incomes above this minimum threshold can manageably pay no more than a certain percentage of their income on their student loan debt. Their formula takes into account the fact that recent graduates with low incomes experience financial constraints at lower debt levels than their higher earning peers.

Using the Baum-Schwarz benchmark for burdensome debt (see methodology for details on this benchmark), we estimated the percentage of public and private college graduates that would face unmanageable debt if they entered these careers. Specifically, we found:

- 23% of public college and 38% of private college graduates would have unmanageable debt as a starting teacher.
- 37% of public college and 55% of private college graduates would have unmanageable debt as a starting social worker.

Table 1. Percentage of College Graduates from Four-Year Institutions with Unmanageable Debt on Starting Teacher or Social Worker Salary

Profession	Percentage of public 4-year students with debt exceeding manageable levels if they entered this profession (U.S. Average)	Percentage of private 4-year students with debt exceeding manageable levels if they entered this profession (U.S. Average)
Teacher	23.2	38.1
Social Worker	37.3	54.8

Sources: 2004 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS); American Federation of Teachers Survey and Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends; and National Association of Colleges and Employers Fall 2005 Salary Survey for starting social worker salaries

The average starting salary for a teacher in school year 2003-2004 was $31,704.[12] According to the Baum-Schwarz benchmark, a new teacher with that income would have just under $13,000 in "discretionary income," considered income above one-half of the national median individual income. Baum and Schwarz suggest that a teacher could pay up to 20% of her discretionary income on loan repayments before that debt becomes burdensome. In the case of the average teacher, that results in a maximum payment of $2,586.50 a year or $216 a month.

Assuming that the first-year teacher plans to repay her loan over 10 years at a 6.8% interest rate, the new teacher can only manage debt repayment on $18,370 in student loans. According to the

National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), in 2003-2004 23% of public four-year college and 38% of private four-year college graduates had more than $18,370 in debt, meaning they would have unmanageably large payments at the average starting teacher salary.

The situation facing beginning social workers is even more difficult. According to the National Association of Collegiate Employers fall 2005 survey of starting job offers, the average starting salary for a social worker was $27,163.[13] At that salary, a first year social worker could manage a $140 monthly loan payment, equivalent to repayment on a $12,153 loan. According to the NPSAS data, 37% of public four-year college and 55% of private four-year college graduates have more than $12,153 in undergraduate loan debt.

We also looked at state-by-state starting teacher salaries and found that in all states, significant numbers of students face unmanageable debt given the current entry-level teacher salary. But graduating students in some states may encounter greater financial obstacles, given lower starting teacher salaries or higher cost-of-living. The 10 states in which the highest percentage of college graduates would face unmanageable debt on a starting teacher salary include New Hampshire, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Vermont, Utah, Maine, South Dakota, Montana, Connecticut, and Minnesota (Table 2). In these states and nine others, more than one-third of public college graduates and more than one-half of private college graduates would face unmanageable debt burden on a starting teacher's salary. Even where teacher salaries are highest relative to debt levels, about one in ten public college graduates and one in five private college graduates would still have an unmanageable debt burden as a new teacher. Refer to the Appendix for data on all 50 states.

Table 2. Ten States with the Highest Percentage of Students Who Would Face Unmanageable Debt as a Starting Teacher

States	Percentage of public 4-year students with debt exceeding manageable levels if they took teaching jobs in this state	Percentage of private 4-year students with debt exceeding manageable levels if they took teaching jobs in this state
New Hampshire	54.1	67.4
Wisconsin	50.3	64.1
North Dakota	46.0	60.9
Vermont	46.0	60.6
Utah	39.3	56.0
Maine	39.3	55.9
South Dakota	38.4	55.3
Montana	37.4	54.8
Connecticut	36.4	54.0
Minnesota	36.1	53.5

Sources: 2004 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS); American Federation of Teachers Survey and Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends

This report looks at teachers and social workers as a bellwether for the impact of student debt on our society. These are critical professions that will need many more college graduates to fill their ranks in the coming years. In addition, they represent a range of socially important, low-to-moderate paying jobs that are increasingly difficult to take for many college graduates.

We ought to consider the growing impact of undergraduate borrowing not only because of its effect on access to higher education, but also because of the effect unmanageable debt may have on opportunities for new graduates. If higher education is ultimately about opening doors for students, excessive student debt may have the opposite effect.

SOLUTIONS

We suggest a number of solutions to address the issue of unmanageable student debt:

Increase Need Based Grant Aid. The federal Pell grant, which helps students with lower incomes, has been stagnant at $4,050 a year for the past four years, while college costs have soared. At the state level, merit-based aid programs have been supplanting need-based aid programs while the overall pool of funds remains the same. Increasing need-based grant aid will reduce how much students have to borrow.

Make Repayment Fair and Affordable. Loan payments should be manageable for borrowers at all income levels, and student debt should not grow unchecked or last indefinitely. Loan repayment policies must be improved so that they do not push borrowers into poverty or discourage people from getting a college degree.

Promote Borrower Protections. As costs rise higher than federal loan limits, students and parents are turning to unregulated private loans to fill the gap. All student loans should have fair and clear interest rates, and students and parents need basic consumer protections in the private loan market. Lenders that give borrowers misleading information and/or charge predatory rates must be punished.

Establish Incentives to Control Tuition. State governments and colleges that keep tuition costs low should receive financial incentives that further enable them to maximize enrollment at an affordable cost to students.

CONCLUSION

Having such a high percentage of students facing burdensome debt has consequences both for specific professions of high social value and the entire economy. As loans continue to play a major role in the way that most students pay for college, more graduates will have to factor loan repayment into their post-collegiate plans—and more may shy away from public service careers with lower starting salaries. In the coming years, public service institutions may need to respond by offering higher salaries or larger benefits, both of which have budgetary implications for

already financially strapped state and local governments.

The student grant and loan programs were established to make our higher education system more fair and our society more equitable. Equality of opportunity requires not only offering all qualified students access to college, but also access to a range of careers upon graduation. A commitment to equality requires that we do not so heavily burden some college students that they are unable to pursue socially valuable and reasonable career paths. Education and social work are critical careers, but also representative of dozens of other professions that are equally valuable and likely to be increasingly out of reach for many college graduates.

METHODOLOGY

Defining Unmanageable Debt

Previous efforts to analyze unmanageable debt have employed 8% of pre-tax income as the threshold for a manageable loan repayment; meaning, a monthly payment that exceeds 8% of monthly pre-tax income is unmanageable. In their 2005 report, *How Much Debt is Too Much*, Sandy Baum and Saul Schwarz attempt to explain the history of the 8% rule. They suggest the 8% rule is a lender benchmark that "arose from mortgage underwriting standards" and is inappropriate for measuring burdensome undergraduate debt.[14] The authors offer several reasons why this measure is flawed and how it could both over- and under-estimate the impact of debt. Ultimately, Baum and Schwarz conclude that a fixed interest rate is inadequate to estimate the impact of debt on graduates with a range of salaries.[15]

To replace the 8% rule, Baum and Schwarz propose a new graduated benchmark system for estimating burdensome student debt. To protect low earning graduates, they suggest that anyone earning "less than half of the median [individual income in the U.S.] should not be expected to make loan payments."[16] For the upper end of the wage earning spectrum they suggest no one should pay more than 17-20% of their pre-tax income on their debt.[17] In between, they suggest graduates should pay no more than 20% of their discretionary income (defined as "income exceeding half of median earnings.")[18] The benefit of the Baum and Schwarz benchmark is that it is responsive to the varying income levels of graduates and more accurately reflects the challenge of low-earning graduates to repay their loans as they start new careers, often in entirely new cities. In addition, this approach addresses the fact that some higher earning graduates can afford to pay more than 8% of their pre-tax income on their student debt than graduates in lower income brackets.

Baum and Schwarz's benchmark, while a significant step forward in defining unmanageable student debt, still has some shortcomings. Neither the proposal to define discretionary income as more than one half of median U.S. individual income nor the proposal to limit repayment to 20% of that income is supported by analysis of the actual condition of recent graduates. Given that cost of living and median income differ based on local economies, one could argue for a definition of discretionary income that was more responsive to the actual condition of borrowers. Similarly, no evidence suggests that 20% of "discretionary income" should be the upper bound of debt repayment.

Despite these considerations, Baum and Schwarz provide a benchmark that is more closely related to the actual experience of recent graduates. As such, we employed the Baum and Schwarz benchmark when analyzing starting salaries and measuring unmanageable debt.

Calculations

We used starting 2003-2004 teacher salary data from the American Federation of Teachers average starting salary report; for starting social worker salaries, we used the National Association of Colleges and Employers regional survey from fall 2005.[19]

To calculate unmanageable debt, we used the benchmark proposed by Sandy Baum and Saul Schwarz in their 2005 paper, *How Much Debt is Too Much? Defining Benchmarks for Manageable Student Debt.* Baum and Schwarz propose that "borrowers with pre-tax incomes less than half the median ($37,543 for full-time workers 25 and older in 2004 in the U.S.) should not be expected to make loan payments."[20] Income above that threshold is considered "discretionary," and students should not use more than 20% of their pre-tax discretionary income for loan repayment.

We first calculated the maximum "manageable" monthly payment an average starting teacher or social worker would be able to make on her or her student loans. To do this, we subtracted $18,771.50 (half of the median individual income in the U.S.) from the starting salaries for each profession. That yielded discretionary income for starting teachers and social workers. For the state-by-state teacher data, we adjusted the $18,771 figure to reflect the cost of living and average wages in each state. To do this, using data from the U.S. Census, we divided the median family income in each state in 2004 and by the U.S. median family income; this gave us the percent by which a state's median family income was above or below the U.S. average. We multiplied that number by the U.S. median individual income used by Baum and Schwarz in *How Much Debt is Too Much?* to create an adjusted state median income for individuals.

We then multiplied discretionary income for each profession by 20% (0.2) and divided by 12 to generate the maximum "manageable" monthly payment. To calculate the debt level that would generate that monthly payment, we used the student loan calculator on www.finaid.com, assuming a 10-year repayment term and a 6.8% interest rate. That process generates the maximum manageable debt level for a starting teacher and social worker.

To calculate the percentage of public and private college graduates carrying cumulative debt in excess of those manageable levels, we used the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, a nationwide survey conducted by the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics.

In addition to Stafford loans, cumulative debt includes private label loans as well as Perkins loans. Perkins loans represent only a small fraction of total debt (2%); while some students will be repaying these loans at 5% interest rates, these loans represent a small part of the overall picture. Private loans will likely be repaid at interest rates higher than 6.8%. By including private loans in the cumulative borrowed number but estimating a repayment at 6.8%, we are likely underestimating the cost of repayment for students.

APPENDIX: PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGE GRADUATES WITH UNMANAGEABLE DEBT ON STARTING TEACHER SALARY: BY STATE

States	Percentage of public 4-year students with debt exceeding manageable levels if they took teaching jobs in this state	Percentage of private 4-year students with debt exceeding manageable levels if they took teaching jobs in this state
Alabama	17.5	28.2
Alaska	13.6	23.1
Arizona	29.4	47.0
Arkansas	25.4	40.3
California	17.9	28.8
Colorado	30.4	48.1
Connecticut	36.4	54.0
Delaware	22.0	36.3
Florida	21.6	35.8
Georgia	11.9	20.8
Hawaii	16.3	26.8
Idaho	34.5	52.3
Illinois	19.2	32.0
Indiana	28.3	45.7
Iowa	36.1	53.4
Kansas	34.1	51.5
Kentucky	22.9	37.8
Louisiana	18.0	28.9
Maine	39.3	55.9
Maryland	35.3	52.6
Massachusetts	33.3	50.6
Michigan	17.7	28.5
Minnesota	36.1	53.5
Mississippi	18.6	30.8
Missouri	29.2	46.9
Montana	37.4	54.8
Nebraska	33.1	50.5

States	Percentage of public 4-year students with debt exceeding manageable levels if they took teaching jobs in this state	Percentage of private 4-year students with debt exceeding manageable levels if they took teaching jobs in this state
Nevada	34.0	51.4
New Hampshire	54.1	67.4
New Jersey	29.2	46.9
New Mexico	13.4	22.5
New York	13.9	23.2
North Carolina	29.4	47.0
North Dakota	46.0	60.9
Ohio	31.0	48.9
Oklahoma	19.4	32.3
Oregon	15.9	26.3
Pennsylvania	16.2	26.6
Rhode Island	25.2	40.0
South Carolina	29.2	46.8
South Dakota	38.4	55.3
Tennessee	19.4	32.8
Texas	15.9	26.2
U.S. Average	**23.2**	**38.1**
Utah	39.3	56.0
Vermont	46.0	60.6
Virginia	30.0	47.7
Washington	33.2	50.6
West Virginia	25.0	40.0
Wisconsin	50.3	64.1
Wyoming	34.3	52.1

Sources: 2004 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS); American Federation of Teachers Survey and Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends

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