



US MARKETS LOADING...
In the news

[HOME](#) > [ECONOMY](#)

Ron DeSantis says he has 'sympathy' for some student-loan borrowers — and wants to make it easier for them to get rid of their debt in court

Ayelet Sheffey



Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks to Iowa voters on March 10, 2023. Scott Olson/Getty Images

- Gov. Ron DeSantis said he supports bankruptcy as an option for student-loan borrowers.
- But he said he doesn't think broad relief should go to those with gender or "zombie studies" degrees.
- The Education and Justice Departments announced reforms to ease the bankruptcy process.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis doesn't support broad student-loan forgiveness. But he does think bankruptcy should be an option for borrowers who cannot afford to pay off their debt.

On Monday, DeSantis unveiled his "Declaration of Economic Independence," which outlines his economic plan should he win the presidential election and includes ten pillars that he said will support the economy and the middle class. As DeSantis said during his Monday remarks, his sixth pillar is to "reform the education system in this country, and we're going to lower barriers of entry, particularly for blue collar workers."

"The reality is we've had a generation of students go deep into debt and some of them end up with degrees in things like zombie studies, which are just not making a difference," DeSantis said.

"It's wrong to say that a truck driver should have to pay off the debt of somebody who got a degree in gender studies. This is not the taxpayers that should have to do that," he continued. "At the same time, I have sympathy for some of these students because I think they were sold a bill of goods. I think these universities knew that they could take all this federal loan money. And if you're there for six years, hey that's more money for them, right? And they do it, and they increase their administrative bloat and they didn't make the the instruction any better."

DeSantis said that a solution to that problem would be holding colleges financially accountable if students are unable to pay off a "successful" degree, and he also said that he thinks "student loans should be dischargeable in bankruptcy."

Debate over the issue of bankruptcy for student-loan borrowers has been ongoing, and a topic lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have been concerned about. In November, President Joe Biden's Education Department announced a series of reforms to the bankruptcy process for borrowers, changing the "undue hardship" standard which previously made it very difficult for borrowers to succeed in bankruptcy relief. The standard required borrowers to show that they cannot maintain a minimal standard of living, that their circumstances aren't likely to improve, and that they have made a good-faith effort to repay their debt.

But courts often had a very strict interpretation of that standard, meaning many borrowers were turned away and had to continue dealing with loans they could not afford. The reforms the Education Department announced, in partnership with the Justice Department, would allow borrowers to submit self-attestation forms that the agencies will use to determine if the borrower meets the undue hardship requirements, allowing the Justice Department to recommend relief to a judge without having to undergo time-consuming investigations.

Those reforms carry a bit of historical irony. As a senator, Biden played a role in making the bankruptcy process harder by supporting a 2005 law that expanded the undue hardship standard to borrowers with private loans, along with federal.

With federal student loan payments resuming in October after an over-three-year pause, lawmakers like Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren want to ensure bankruptcy is a viable option for those who find they cannot afford another monthly bill. Last week, Warren requested updated information from the Justice Department on the status of implementation of the new reforms to the process.

She wrote that "this updated guidance is designed to allow the DOJ and ED to facilitate the objective of more

discharges and provide hope for borrowers seeking bankruptcy as a viable pathway to financial freedom."

Read next

- Policy
- Politics
- Economy
- More...



* Copyright © 2023 Insider Inc. All rights reserved. Registration on or use of this site constitutes acceptance of our Terms of Service and Privacy Policy .

[Contact Us](#) | [Masthead](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Disclaimer](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Commerce Policy](#) | [Advertising Policies](#) | [Coupons](#) | [Made in NYC](#) | [Jobs @ Insider](#)

[Stock quotes by finanzen.net](#) | [Reprints & Permissions](#)

International Editions: [INTL](#) | [AS](#) | [AT](#) | [DE](#) | [ES](#) | [IN](#) | [JP](#) | [MX](#) | [NL](#) | [PL](#)