

Macias, Wendy

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2009 11:11 PM
To: negreg09
Subject: The System

The student loan collection system uses humiliation and intimidation to attempt to meet its ends. At a certain point all of the coercion becomes counterproductive. My college lost the paperwork for my deferment when I was pregnant and a single mother and I was terrorized from then on every time I let the collectors have my information. For many years I was on the run from these grasping authority figures. Eventually I developed an anxiety disorder with panic attacks. Often the episodes were triggered by interaction with government bureaucrats and collectors. When I was employed I received calls from the debt collectors and my employers were notified of my defaulted loan status and that I had not been able to pay on my loans. I received constantly received calls even at a workplace where all calls were recorded.

I have never had an adequate income to make the amount of payment that was required. Because of the defaulted status of my loans, I was unable to receive loan forgiveness for the years I taught school. My first job paid \$19,210 and the loan collectors wanted me to pay 800 dollars a month on my loans. I had gone into teaching believing that the costs of my education could be offset by the loan forgiveness program for educators that existed at the time.

At this point in my late 40's I have cobbled together a quilt of government programs that allows me to survive without working. If I worked and had my paycheck garnished I would do much worse financially. If I could have my student loans discharged, there is a possibility that I could become a taxpaying citizen. As it stands now the government pays all of what I live off of with no possibility that things will change. My financial progress is nonexistent. I will probably never be able to have significant resources or own a home. I am completely painted into a corner.

Banks have made a fortune on the student loan program and their predatory practices have left the nation with a bitter taste and lack of trust in the system. Even if the law changed in such a way as to allow student loans that had been in repayment status for ten years to be discharged it would help people living on the economic fringes of society to make a fresh start. After 10 years most people who will find their way to prosperity have found a way.

Unfortunately, this financial nightmare that I live in has left my children without a number of things. Mostly, it has left them without a role model demonstrating the power of work. They have seen that the government or an individual will always attempt to take the little that you are able to put together. They have learned along with me that the American dream is dead for us and that you cannot trust the government to act on behalf of its marginalized citizens.

I wish that I thought this missive would be a step toward creating equity in a system designed to assist the rich and nail the poor but I have little hope for that. I am very glad that my children will not have to live through the financial hell I have endured. I am a decent person who gives all to help her children. It is a comfort that programs now exist thanks to President Obama that can bring education to individuals who have lived in poverty. Hopefully they will find a way out.