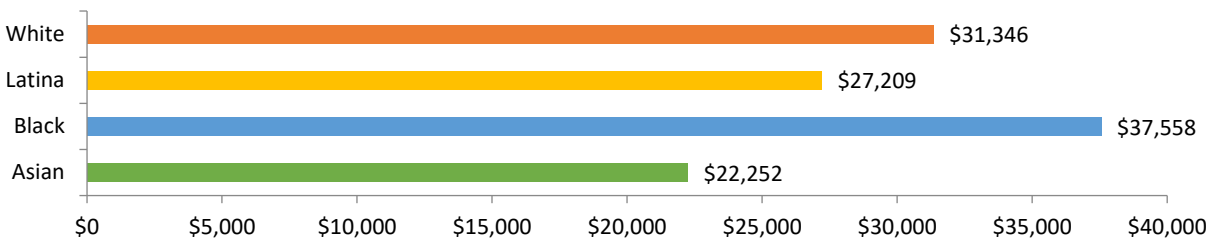


## Women and the Burden of Student Debt: Where the Presidential Candidates Stand

Since its founding in 1881, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) has been committed to making the dream of higher education a reality for all women. Yet the price tag of a college education has more than doubled, leaving Americans to carry \$1.54 trillion in student loan debt.<sup>1</sup> Women are particularly burdened, holding nearly two-thirds of all outstanding loans: \$929 billion.<sup>2</sup> Student debt is the second-highest source of household debt after housing<sup>3</sup> and women earning a bachelor's degree graduate owing an average of \$2,700 more than their male peers.

### The Facts: Women's Student Debt Burden



COVID-19 has exacerbated the student debt problem.<sup>4</sup> Record-high unemployment, the loss of supplementary income and inadequate benefits have made it harder for recent graduates—and for women in particular—to pay back their student loans. In order to ensure a full and equitable recovery from the pandemic and its economic fallout, AAUW supports legislation that address the challenges women face before, during and after college. Congress must pass legislation that would take a more meaningful and targeted approach to the debt burden of women of color, cancel student debt, simplify repayment plans, and eliminate the pay gap that plays a major role in the student debt burden on women.

### The 2020 Presidential Candidates and Student Debt\*

Donald Trump (R)	Joe Biden (D) <sup>5</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>No position on student debt explicitly articulated on campaign website<sup>6</sup></i></li> <li>• Revised income based repayment program with payments set at 12.5% of discretionary income<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• End Public Service Loan Forgiveness</li> <li>• Give financial aid administrators more power in setting loan limits to prevent overborrowing</li> <li>• End federally subsidized student loans</li> <li>• Halted student loan payments through end of 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals making \$25,000 or less per year will not owe any payments and won't accrue any interest on federal student loans</li> <li>• Individuals earning more than \$25,000 will pay 5% of their discretionary income toward their loans.</li> <li>• After 20 years, the remainder of the loans will be 100% forgiven.</li> <li>• Will create a public service loan forgiveness offering \$10,000 student debt relief for every year of national/community service, up to five years.</li> </ul>

\*Positions include plans and policy proposals delineated on 2020 candidate websites.

<sup>1</sup> Center for American Progress (2019, June 12). [Addressing the \\$1.5 Trillion in Federal Student Loan Debt](#).

<sup>2</sup> American Association of University Women (2020). [Deeper in Debt: Women & Student Debt](#).

<sup>3</sup> Federal Reserve Bank of New York (2020). [Quarterly Report on Household Debt and Credit: 2020 Q2](#).

<sup>4</sup> Brookings (2020, June 3). [The next COVID-19 relief bill must include student debt cancellation](#).

<sup>5</sup> Biden (2020). [The Biden Plan for Education Beyond High School](#).

<sup>6</sup> Trump (2020). [Trump Campaign Announces President Trump's 2<sup>nd</sup> Term Agenda: Fighting for You!](#)

<sup>7</sup> Clark, C. (2020, September 17). [Donald Trump's Student Loan Plan: What It Could Mean for You](#)