

TEXT STUDIES

TEXT 1 (Introduction to the semester)

'This decision is a slap in the face': the real cost of the US student debt ruling

Wed 5 Jul 2023

The supreme court's decision was met with widespread anger from borrowers struggling to escape the burden of student debt, a system built under a 'no-win scenario'.

Millions of Americans were left reeling on Friday after the US supreme court struck down the Biden administration's plan to forgive **\$430bn** in student debt, stirring anxiety among borrowers just months before student loan payments are set to resume in October. "This decision is a slap in the face to millions of Americans who, like me, were told to pursue college and dream of a brighter future, and are now punished for doing so," said Tim Scalona, a law student at Suffolk University in Boston. The United States' \$1.75tn student debt crisis harms a whopping **40 million borrowers**, who for the past three years have had their payments paused because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Last August, the White House unveiled a plan to forgive \$10,000 in student debt for borrowers under a certain income threshold. Pell grant recipients were eligible to receive up to \$20,000 in relief, offering a glimmer of hope for low-income borrowers struggling to escape the crushing, sometimes lifelong burden of college debt. (...) But last week, the court ruled that the president had overstepped executive authority. The announcement was met with widespread anger from borrowers and working-class Americans, with progressive lawmakers urging the president to release "plan B" for student debt relief. In response, the president outlined a new plan to ease the toll of student debt, this time using the Higher Education Act of 1965. Biden also announced plans to enact **a 12-month repayment program** that would forgive late payments, meaning a borrower's credit score will not suffer if they miss a payment between October 2023 and 30 September 2024. "This new path is legally sound," Biden said Friday. "It's going to take longer, but, in my view, it's the best path that remains to provide for as many borrowers as possible with debt relief. But news of the Save plan was overshadowed by disappointment and anger about the supreme court ruling. Relieved to hear that there's a new plan for reducing student debt, Scalona is the first in his family to attend a four-year college and will owe roughly \$150,000 in student loans when he graduates law school. Scalona began dreaming of college as a teenager. Scalona graduated in spring 2020 at the height of the pandemic, facing a shrinking job market with \$35,000 in student debt. "I was told, don't worry about how much debt you rack up, because you'll be able to get a good job and pay it off," he said. "Now that debt consumes my every action and thought, that anxiety can be really debilitating." When the White House first unveiled its original debt relief plan last year, many US borrowers, said the president had not gone far enough to address the American student debt crisis. If the supreme court hadn't intervened, Biden could point to his administration's student debt relief program as a fulfilled campaign promise. Student debt relief — not cancellation — was a centerpiece of Biden's 2020 presidential bid.

www.theguardian.com

I. Vocabulary. In the text, find the English for :

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| - Emprunteur | - Prêt étudiant | |
| - Un plafond de revenus. | - devoir (de l'argent) | - Accumuler |

II. True or false ? Justify by quoting the text

- The Supreme Court decided to invalidate President Biden's plan to cancel part of the student debt.
- The announce of a plan B helped to appease borrowers' anger.
- Biden's first plan was considered as satisfactory by most US borrowers.

III. React : DEBATE With your classmates.

—> What do you think of the student debt crisis in the US ? Of the situation for young workers/ former students ? And of the **higher education system** ? Compare with the the French system.

IV . GRAMMAR FOCUS 1 : USING NUMBERS AND DATES