

Leonard Stoehr, Representative, Teamsters Local 206, Springfield

Not a month goes by that I don't hear from a Teamster afraid that he or she will not be able to afford to send a child to college. With the escalating cost of a college education, there are fewer and fewer ways for a working family to pay for a child to attend without assuming a crushing debtload.

With jobs a scarcity in Eugene and Springfield, it becomes imperative for a child to get a degree to qualify even for many menial entry-level jobs. Many firms and companies require degrees even for an internship.

Academic scholarships are harder to come by, and when I go next year to visit colleges with my daughter, it's an unfortunate fact that the annual tuitions will play a large role in determining which college she is able to attend.

By making college more affordable and allowing graduates relief from a mountain of student debt, the Pay It Forward program would be a boon to union and working families throughout the state. We are not seeking a firm commitment at this time, but rather a task force to study the feasibility of this program. A country that sacrifices its youth is surrendering its future. Thank you.