



Paying the Price of Parenting: Nearly two-thirds of Georgians Willing to Go In Debt to Put Their Child Through College

Georgians willing to take on an average of \$26k in debt for their child's higher education

ATLANTA, GA (June 04, 2019) – The recent college admissions scandal sent shockwaves through America and revealed the extreme lengths that parents will go to get their children into the best schools. However, a new survey from COUNTRY Financial® shows that most Georgians, while not breaking any laws, are willing to go to financial extremes when it comes to their child's college education.

The survey found that 63 percent of Georgians would voluntarily go into debt to pay for their child's college education, with the average person willing to take on \$26K in debt. Interestingly, the survey also found that men are willing to take on a higher debt amount than women to pay for their child's education (\$29K vs. \$25K).

Most Georgians (79 percent) believe it's important to have a college degree when looking for a job, and 68 percent believe a college degree is worth the investment.

"Parents obviously want to help their children succeed. Working with an advisor can make the daunting task of planning for college expenses more manageable," said Chris Seabrook, Financial Representative, COUNTRY Financial. "From completing the FAFSA, to understanding expected family contributions an advisor can make sure you make the most of your resources."

Parents are saving for college, but it's not enough

According to the College Board's 2018 [report](#) on trends in college pricing, in-state tuition and fees at public four-year institutions have increased at an average rate of 3.1% per year beyond inflation for the past 10 years. Given the rising costs of college, parents are saving up as early as possible, with thirty-four percent of Georgians saving for their child's college education when the child is the age of five years or younger. However, thirty-two percent of parents have not been able to save anything for their child's education, with forty-seven percent of parents admitting that having a child is more expensive than they anticipated.

Interestingly, the survey found that those without a financial planner are more likely than those with a financial planner to say that they have not been able to put any money aside for their child's college education (9 percent vs. 31 percent, respectively).

Despite all the effort parents put into furthering their child's education, their contributions are often not enough to cover the full cost of tuition—only 17 percent of parents predict/report that their contribution will cover 81 to 100 percent of their child's education. In fact, six in ten more than half of those surveyed said they predict they'll be able to cover, or were able to cover, 62 percent or less of their child's college education costs.

"Parents should make sure they fill out the FAFSA in a timely manner especially if they have a financial need," said Seabrook. "They should also research merit-based aid programs offered by their desired schools as a way to offset cost."



To make college more affordable, students are working while attending (60 percent), attending community college (28 percent), applying for scholarships (48 percent), applying for financial aid (46 percent) and, of course, taking out student loans (45 percent).

Making sacrifices to prepare their kids for success with extracurriculars and prep classes

Thirty-eight percent of those who attended or are planning for college said they have enrolled in at least one financially-taxing extracurricular to help improve either their own or their child's chances of getting into college. The most popular extracurriculars included SAT or ACT prep classes (13 percent), private sports (10 percent), music, language or art lessons (8 percent) and hiring an academic tutor (5 percent). Thirty-two percent of Georgia parents estimate they spend \$1,000 - \$5,000 per year; 19% spent \$500 - \$1,000 per year and 26% spend less than \$500 per year on these activities.

In order to afford these extracurricular activities, Georgians are willing to make financial sacrifices such as cutting back on vacations (23 percent), pulling from their savings accounts (22 percent), taking out a loan (15 percent) and even taking on part-time jobs (27 percent).

Parents still paying off own student loans

On top of the stress of paying for their child's college education, parents also still worry about paying off their own student loan debt. Sixty-five percent of parents surveyed said it would take or has taken five years or longer to pay off their loans, and about nine percent of parents predict they won't be able to pay off their student loans in their lifetime. Thirty-one percent of people who took out loans of their own say they would not be willing to take on debt for their kids.

About the COUNTRY Financial Security Index®

Since 2007, the COUNTRY Financial Security Index has measured Americans' sentiments of their personal financial security. The Index also delves deeper into individual personal finance topics to better inform Americans about the issues impacting their finances. Survey data, videos and analysis are available at www.countryfinancial.com/newsroom and on Twitter at @helloCOUNTRY.

The COUNTRY Financial Security Index was created by COUNTRY Financial and is compiled by Ipsos an independent research firm. Surveys were conducted using Ipsos' KnowledgePanel®, a national, probability-based panel designed to be representative of the general population and includes responses from approximately 1,025 U.S. adults for national surveys. The margin of sampling error for a survey based on this many interviews is approximately +/- 3 percentage points with a 95 percent level of confidence.

About COUNTRY Financial®

The COUNTRY Financial® group (www.countryfinancial.com) serves about one million households and businesses throughout the United States. It offers a wide range of



financial products and services from auto, home, business and life insurance to retirement planning services, investment management and annuities.

About Ipsos Public Affairs

Ipsos is an independent market research company controlled and managed by research professionals. Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos has grown into a worldwide research group with a strong presence in all key markets. Ipsos ranks third in the global research industry. At Ipsos we are passionately curious about people, markets, brands and society. We make our changing world easier and faster to navigate and inspire clients to make smarter decisions. We deliver with security, speed, simplicity and substance. We are Game Changers. With offices in 88 countries, Ipsos delivers insightful expertise across six research specializations: advertising, customer loyalty, marketing, media, public affairs research, and survey management. Ipsos researchers assess market potential and interpret market trends. We develop and build brands. We help clients build long-term relationships with their customers. We test advertising and study audience responses to various media and they measure public opinion around the globe. Visit www.ipsos.com/en-us to learn more about Ipsos' offerings and capabilities.

###