

Twitter Thread by Blake Zeff



Blake Zeff

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I've covered student debt obsessively for the past 6 years for a documentary (coming soon!). One of the most misunderstood parts of this debate is: folks with graduate degrees. Many seem to think this group is all rich (or soon to be). This is weird & incorrect.

Quick thread...

You realize that teachers & nurses have graduate degrees, right? Do you think they're rich? One teacher we spoke with is a 1st-generation college grad, now 150k in debt from compounding interest on his undergrad + masters degrees. The burden got so bad, he contemplated suicide.

Then there's veterinarians. Do you know their average student debt is ~200k? Not nightmare or worse-case scenario. Average. They don't become wealthy either. Their suicide rates are very high in part because of debt. Does anyone think veterinarians are frivolous parts of society?

Now let's talk about the biggest bogeyman: lawyers & doctors. This may come as a shock but not all lawyers go to school to defend oil companies. Some want to be public defenders or work in civil rights. Their degrees cost hundreds of thousands, but they make a fraction of that.

A woman we spoke with grew up poor & lost her mom to cancer. So she devoted her life to working hard to become a doctor & treat patients in low-resource settings. She's now 250k in debt, can't afford to work on a lower salary & has to give up on her dream to serve those in need.

So no, MANY people with grad degrees aren't rich. They're folks who want to contribute to society. Others got undergrad degrees but found the job market impossible to penetrate so they worked harder to bolster their chances.

Much of the antipathy towards them is truly misguided.