

Obama unveils initiative to help students find financial aid



By Meghashyam Mali • 3/7/14 12:00 AM

[President Obama](#) on Friday unveiled a new initiative to help students seeking [financial aid](#) for college, touting the latest step in his “opportunity agenda.”

“One of the single most important parts of our opportunity agenda is making sure that every young person in America has access to a world-class education,” said Obama, speaking to high school students in Miami, Fla.

The president visited Coral Reef High School along with [First lady Michelle Obama](#) to promote the new initiative. It is intended to encourage more students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which is required for them to receive federal financial assistance. States and colleges also use information from the form to award aid.

Under the FAFSA Completion Initiative, the [Department of Education](#) will work with states to identify those students who have not completed the form, along with new outreach efforts to help more students.

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The [White House](#) said the effort would build on earlier steps taken by Obama to simplify the form and make it easier for parents and students to use information from their tax returns to complete the paperwork.

“For the past five years we’ve been working to make college more affordable,” said Obama citing his efforts on education. “Today, more young people are earning college degrees than ever before. That’s a great thing.”

But he added that “we still need to do more to help rein in the rising costs of tuition.”

"We need to do more to help Americans who feel trapped by student loan debt, because no striving, hardworking, ambitious young American should ever be denied a [college education](#) just because they can't afford it," said the president.

Obama has vowed to push policies that help the middle class and fight income inequality in his second term. His proposals though are unlikely to be picked up by the GOP-controlled House, and Obama has vowed to use executive actions and act alone where Congress does not.

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The president said he welcomed lawmakers' help, but that he did not require Congress' "permission" to act.

Obama also spoke personally, telling the students that he and the first lady "were only here because of the education we got. That was our ticket to success."

"She and I have been able to achieve things that our parents, our grandparents would have never dreamed of. And that's the chance this country should give every young person," he said.

Since his [State of the Union address](#), Obama has taken a number of unilateral steps from signing an order raising the minimum wage for new federal contract workers to unveiling new education and manufacturing initiatives with help from the private sector.

Obama praised the school, noting they had the second highest FAFSA completion rate in the state and encouraged younger students to fill the form.

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