

Chicago Tribune

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Preparing students

Your article "Education Inc.; Experts: For-profit schools don't always deliver on promises" (News, Sept. 23), by Tribune reporter Gregory Karp, included information on the Department of Education's proposed "gainful employment" rule, which would strip federal financial aid for 360,000 qualified students at for-profit career colleges. The article dramatically understated the negative impact these federal rules would have on access to higher education. Further your story ignored statistics that demonstrate that these schools actually cost taxpayers far less than public colleges, better prepare their students to get a job and post similar loan-repayment rates.

According to census figures, taxpayers spend about \$7,000 less per year to educate the average career-college student but get twice the rate of return on the investment compared to community-college students. That's because career-college students are better prepared for the workforce. While career colleges account for only 9 percent of all college students, they graduate an unusually high percentage of workers in fast-growing fields, such as health care and the information technology industry, according to the Department of Education's own numbers.

Moreover a Parthenon Group study found career colleges achieved a graduation rate 20 percent higher than public institutions, and the Department of Education's own data show that career-college graduates from 50 of the largest institutions repay their loans at the same rate as community-college graduates.

Career-college graduates are doing more with fewer public dollars. Why punish them?

— *Ricardo Aponte Parsi, president, Inter American Businessmen's Association, San Juan, Puerto Rico*