

Office: Attorney General of Nevada

Candidate: Aaron Ford

Party: Democratic

Campaign website: FordForNevada.com

Q: Public funding of higher education has declined in relative terms over the past two decades while student fees and tuition have increased and student debt has rapidly expanded, both nationally and in Nevada. How should these issues be addressed?

Ford: As Attorney General, I'm committed to protecting students from scams and frauds -- especially around predatory loans -- concerning student debt.

Additionally, to build an economy that works for more Nevadans -- one in which the benefits of higher education are broadly shared and felt by every community regardless of race or class -- I would implore Nevada state lawmakers to: (1) Invest in high-quality, affordable, and accessible public higher education by increasing funding for public two- and four-year colleges; (2) Bolster need-based aid programs, as opposed to merit-based programs that benefit students who would most likely attend college without additional aid; and; (3) Craft funding formulas that focus additional state funds on building the capacity of colleges with the fewest resources.

Q: The recruitment and retention of state employees, including faculty and staff in our public colleges and universities in Nevada, has become a crisis. Reasons cited for widespread vacancies include lagging compensation and cuts to healthcare benefits. What solutions do you have to restore and retain the higher education workforce in Nevada?

Ford: I supported the Nevada State Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force to evaluate and address the challenges of attracting and retaining teachers -- for primary and secondary schools -- throughout Nevada. The Task Force makes recommendations to the Legislative Committee on Education to address these challenges, which may include providing incentives, and submit a report each odd-numbered year regarding the findings and recommendations of the Task Force. We should devote this level of attention and energy to faculty and staff shortages in our public colleges and universities in Nevada.

Q: Do you support collective bargaining rights for professional employees in our public colleges and universities?

Ford: Yes

Q: Do you support the principle of academic freedom that protects faculty members from political interference in their teaching and scholarship? (For more information see the AAUP 1940 Statement on Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure.)

Ford: Yes

(Submitted 8/4/2022)