

Just who are these so-called taxpayers?

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AS A college teacher of writing and rhetoric, I find the use of the word “taxpayers” by John E. Sununu and other conservative columnists interesting. In his Oct. 31 op-ed column [“Helping the economy?”](#) Sununu raises the alarm that taxpayers are footing the bill for housing and student loan programs announced by President Obama.

According to many media sources, one in every four homeowners in the United States is underwater, meaning the borrower owes more on the home than it is worth. Are these homeowners not taxpayers?

I have contact with many students whom I am sure have taken out student loans. I am also the parent of three college students. I was unaware that I was not a taxpayer, that these students’ parents were not taxpayers, that working students are not taxpayers, and that full-time students who hope to obtain gainful employment when they graduate will not be taxpayers.

Sununu seems concerned that the policies Obama proposes encourage “irresponsible behavior” and walking “away from debts.” Yet the housing crisis was created in large part by the irresponsible behavior of banks, mortgage lenders, and speculators. Many of these same institutions were rescued from the consequences of their irresponsible behavior and allowed to walk away from their debt, yet are unwilling to extend the same leniency to struggling homeowners.

Moreover, the student loan industry has fueled an outrageous inflation of college costs that is putting higher education out of reach for many unless students and their families are willing to assume enormous amounts of debt.

Who then are the “taxpayers” Sununu is talking about who would be so damaged by Obama’s proposals? Perhaps they are the 1 percent.

Rosemarie Buxton

North Andover

The writer is an adjunct instructor at University of Massachusetts Lowell and Hesser College. She is also president of Merrimack Valley Project, a community organizing group focusing on the foreclosure issue.