

2020 Planning & Progress Study

Student Debt

Northwestern Mutual is the marketing name for The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company (NM), Milwaukee, WI and its subsidiaries.

Background

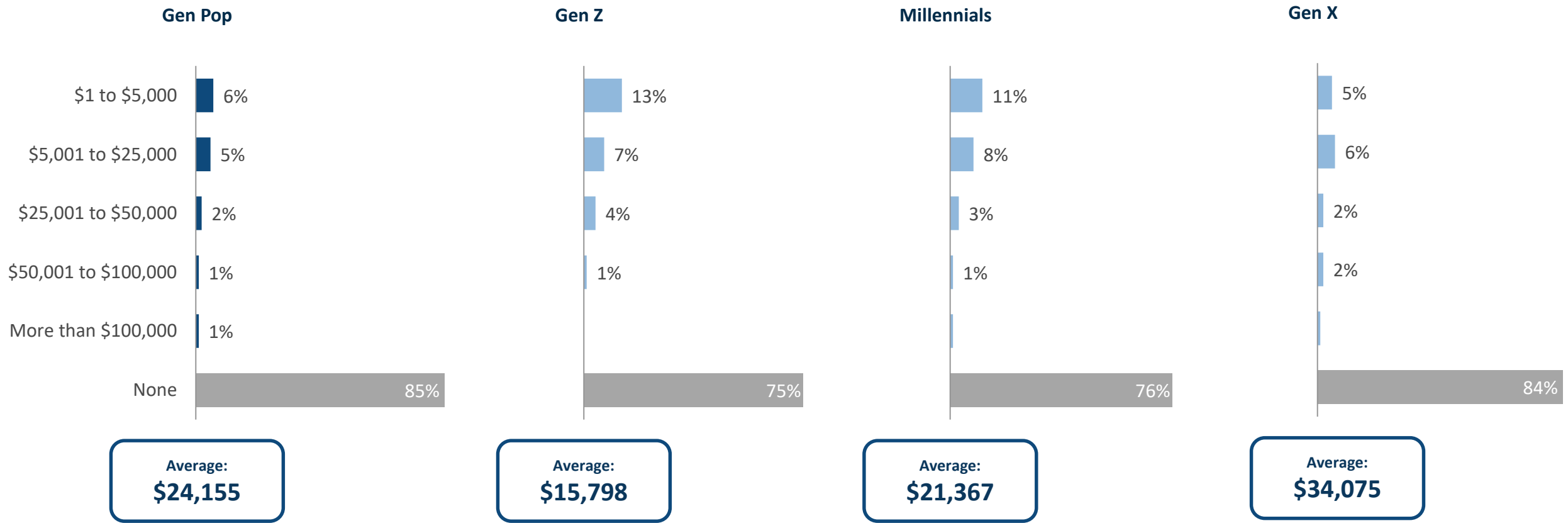
The 2020 Planning & Progress Study, a research series from Northwestern Mutual, explores U.S. adults' attitudes and behaviors toward money, financial decision-making, and the broader issues impacting people's long-term financial security.

The study was conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of Northwestern Mutual and included 2,650 American adults aged 18 or older in the general population who participated in an online survey between February 12-25, 2020.

Results were weighted to Census targets for education, age/gender, race/ethnicity, region and household income. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

On average, Americans with student debt hold balances of \$24,155

Incidence of student debt is higher among Gen Z and Millennials with about 1 in 4 reporting student debt compared to just 16% of Gen X. However, average student loan debt balances are higher among the two older generations compared to Gen Z.

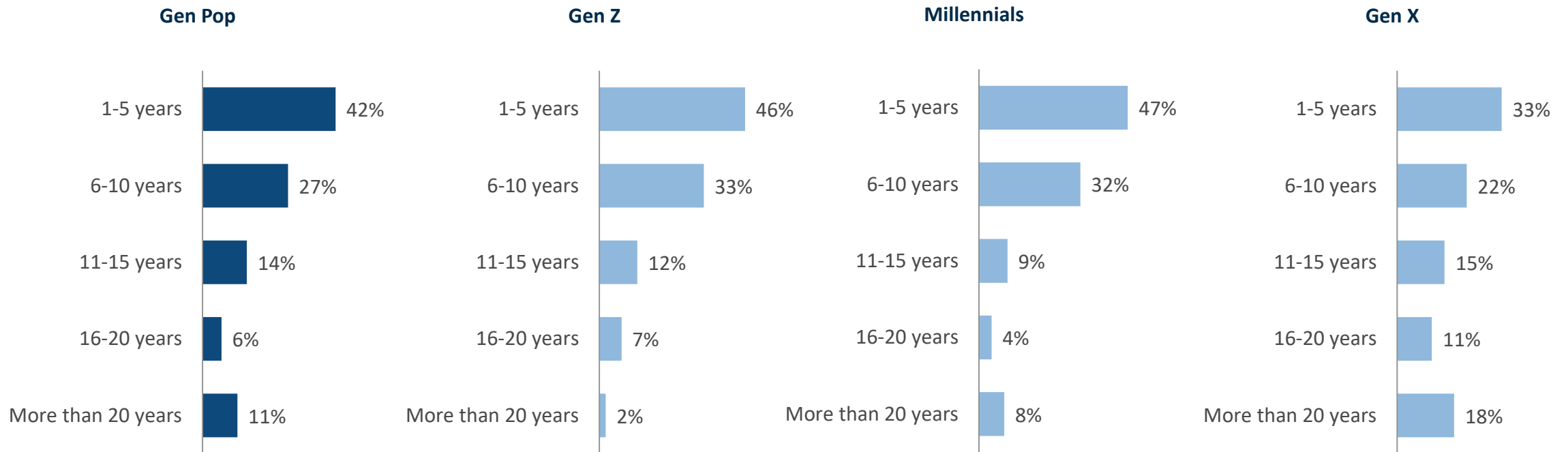


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS – Gen Pop: (n=2650); Gen Z: (n=485); Millennials: (n=641); Gen X: (n=631)

N10. How much student debt do you personally hold?

1 in 10 (11%) Americans believe it will take over 20 years to pay off their student loan debt

Nearly half of Gen Z and Millennials expect to pay off their student loans in 1 to 5 years, compared to just 1 in 3 Gen Xers.

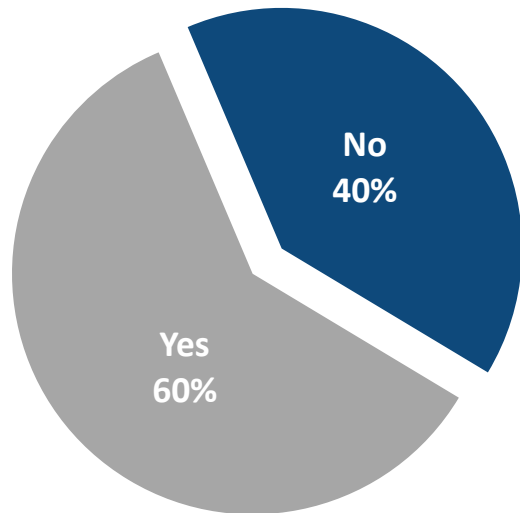


BASE: THOSE WITH STUDENT DEBT – Gen Pop (n=473); Gen Z (n=115); Millennials (n=193); Gen X (n=127)

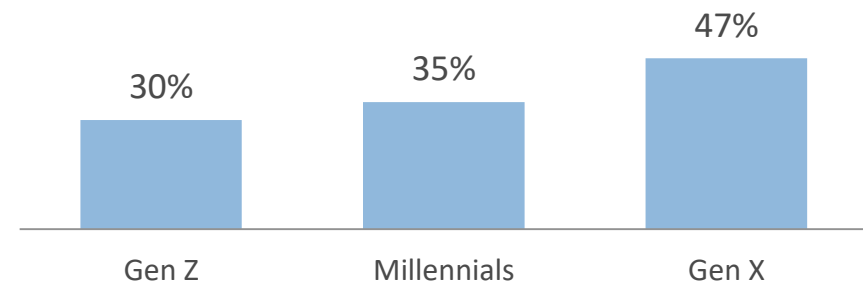
N11. How many more years do you expect to be holding student debt?

Two in five (40%) Americans say they did not have a proper understanding of the implications of taking on student debt when they elected to seek a loan

**Proper Understanding of Implications
When Electing to Take on Student Debt**



**Percent Saying They Did Not Have Proper
Understanding of Student Loan Implications
By Generation**



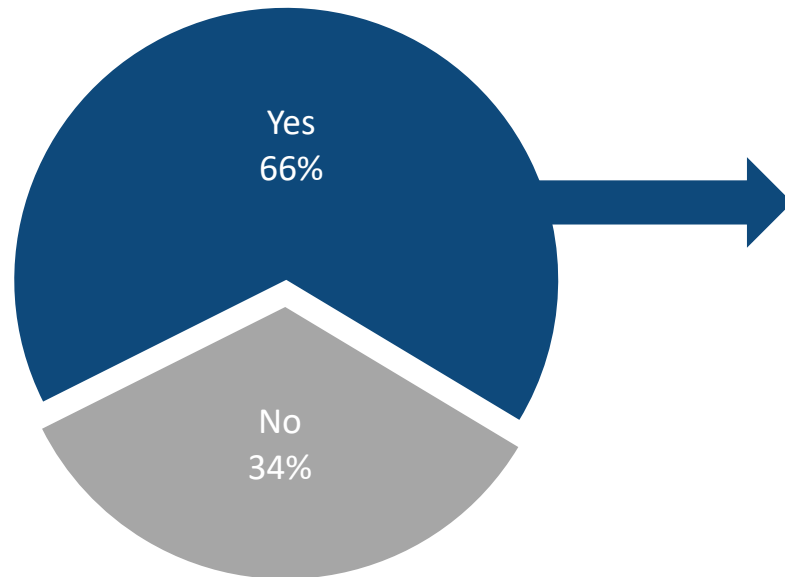
BASE: THOSE WITH STUDENT DEBT – Gen Pop: (n=473); Gen Z: (n=115); Millennials (n=193); Gen X: (n=127)

N12. Do you think you had a proper understanding of the implications of taking on student debt when you elected to do so?

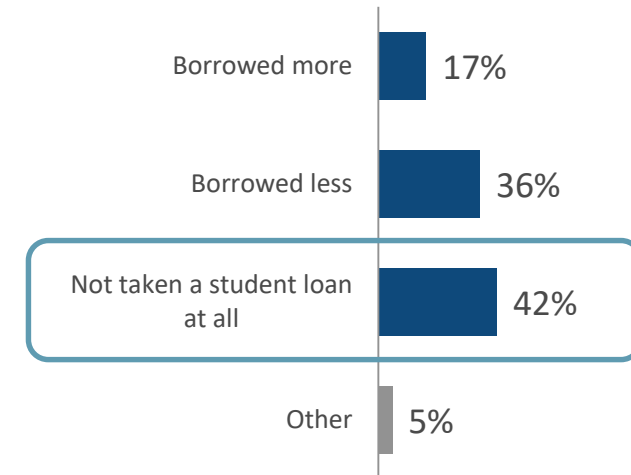
Two-thirds say they would change something about their student loan decision

More specifically, a plurality (42%) would not have taken a student loan at all.

Would change anything about decision to take a student loan



What would be done differently



	% Borrowed More	% Borrowed Less	Not taken a loan
Gen Z (D)	16%	57%	22%
Millennials (E)	19%	36%	44%
Gen X (F)	21%	30%	41%

BASE: THOSE WITH STUDENT DEBT – Gen Pop: (n=473); Gen Z: (n=115); Millennials (n=193); Gen X: (n=127)

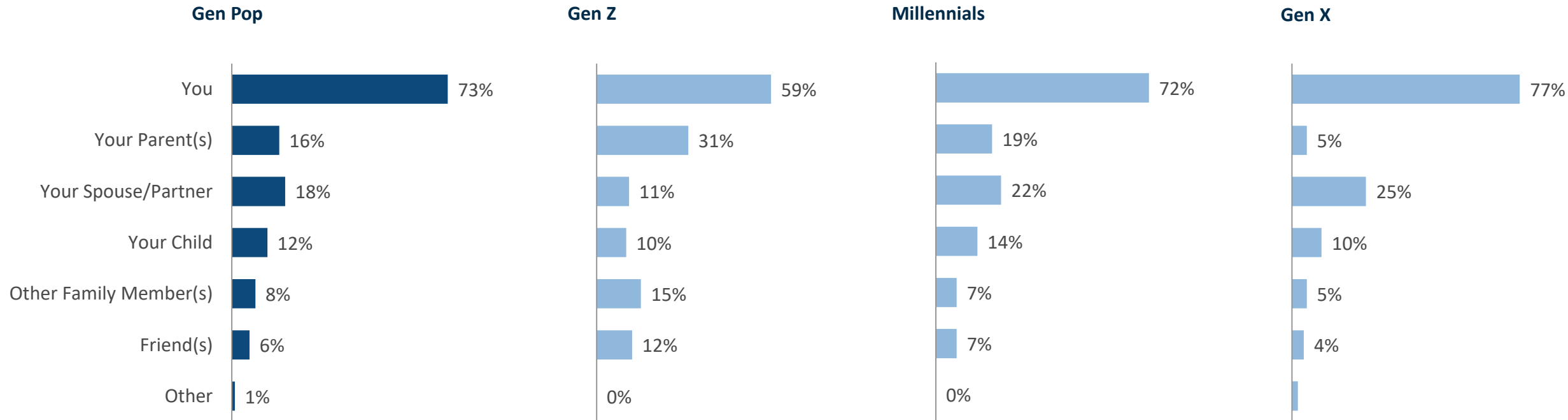
N14. Would you change anything about your decision to take a student loan?

BASE: THOSE WITH STUDENT DEBT AND WOULD CHANGE DECISION TO TAKE A STUDENT LOAN – Gen Pop: (n=328); Gen Z: (n=68); Millennials (n=140); Gen X: (n=94)

N15. What would you have done differently?

*Caution: Small base size

1 in 6 (16%) Americans say parents are helping pay off student loan debt



BASE: THOSE WITH STUDENT DEBT – Gen Pop: (n=473); Gen Z: (n=115); Millennials (n=193); Gen X: (n=127)

N16. Who contributes/has contributed to paying off your student debt? Please select all that apply.