Support students

As government funding for higher education subsides and the costs to educate students increase, the need for scholarship funding has become critically important.

As I reflect on my career as a Vietnam veteran, physician and business owner, as well as a husband of 48 years and father, I realize my path was made possible due to my education and life experiences at both Loyola University Chicago and the University of Illinois at Chicago.

My wife completed her bachelor's in mathematics at Mundelein College, now part of Loyola. Our collective educational experience had a strong hand in forming the people we are today, and we have shared our lessons learned with our four children, all college graduates.

Our hard work, initiative and determination created our success. However, years ago, tuitions were comparatively lower and state institutions had significant government support. At U. of I., where I earned my medical degree, tuition costs were modest.

Today's students face a more daunting financial future.

Generosity is one solution to this problem.

Giving back is a lesson all must learn if future generations are to become successful.

The gift of education in all forms is one of the greatest gifts we can give.

For us, many years after completing our education, our careers afforded us the opportunity and the privilege to give back.

My wife and I made a financial commitment to Loyola to start a scholarship program that awards grant funding to undergraduate math and science students to pursue research.

In just five years, more than 20 students have been assisted and have graduated from the program and from Loyola. Each year, a highlight for us is meeting these wonderful scholars and learning about their research.

They are outstanding individuals — intelligent, mature, committed and generous.

Meeting these students makes us feel hopeful about our future.
Yet there is concern because there are many other deserving students who, because of financial constraints, will either graduate with staggering debt or simply can't afford an excellent education.

— Dr. Michael J. Carbon, member, Board of Trustees, Loyola University Chicago

**School choice**

The former CEO of the Chicago Public Schools, Jean-Claude Brizard, is correct in advocating for change and diffusing the leviathan of central school control ("Chicago schools need radical change," Commentary, Oct. 30).

But he is very wrong in how best to implement the change we owe our children.

As an insider, he believes only other insiders know what is right for us all. As a parent of three school-age children, I believe I should be empowered to make the correct individual choice for my own children with their best interests in mind.

I strongly believe we should seek a public policy that allows a parent, guardian or student to choose the district, charter or private school of his or her choice, regardless of his or her address. My reasoning is backed by years of documented success in school-choice programs throughout the country.

School choice is a common-sense idea that allows students and their families to make educated choices for themselves, while also encouraging healthy competition among schools, teachers and other institutions to better serve students' needs and priorities.

CPS, like most school districts in the U.S., operate on a 19th-century industrial model for delivering goods and services. With the Internet, iPad, iPhone and Facebook now changing our world, isn't time we look for a modern model for giving our children the best education possible?

— Michael Evans, Chicago

**We the people**

In the wake of the recent election, I'm troubled, not by who won and lost but by some open issues.

A strong two-party system enables positive legislation to emerge by debating ways and means to advance our nation, yet in a number of states, Republicans enacted legislation aimed at disenfranchising minority and young voters instead of campaigning on the specifics of what they'd do to advance our nation.
By gerrymandering congressional districts, Democrats also are guilty of trying to sway election elections by skewing voter turnout.

Freedom of speech, fine; but how can we avoid being swamped by the tidal waves of negative advertising that engulfed us before the election? Why not specifics on what a candidate will do if elected? And the fortunes that the PACs spent: Wouldn't we be better off if they donated the funds to help the downtrodden?

We have a federal government "of the people," and it's up to us people to make our voices heard on issues like these, not just at the polling place but also between elections.

— Justin M. Fishbein, Highland Park