

Arizona should look at alternatives to the easy-fix solution of slashing our state universities' budgets by \$75 million. If that plan goes through, our economy is going to take a big hit. As a building construction contractor, I know taking so much money away from universities would negatively impact the construction industry. Also, education is a business, and cutting school funding is not going to keep our classrooms full. Besides, my 17-year-old son really wants to go to ASU, and I want him to get a top-notch education.

With such a drastic cut, the quality of teaching, education, and everything else that universities do will take a nosedive. Our major schools, like UA and ASU, are always under construction, and I know first-hand how important this development is to our economy. I'm in the middle of building a high school, but all my subcontractors work on the university campuses. Slowing down, or shutting down, those operations affects our economy at the base end. Furthermore, universities employ so many people, from professors to librarians and groundskeepers. The list of jobs that universities create and support goes on and on. Arizona can't afford to throw jobs out the window, or have more parents not being able to pay for their children to get a secondary education.

When a prospective student is deciding which college to attend, he or she may choose New Mexico State over ASU after they hear about a massive cut to Arizona's universities. My thinking is that our collegiate sports programs would be leaching money from other aspects of university budgets, such as research funding. I played hockey in college, though I don't think that is the direction we want to take our state educational institutions. Things like attracting new professors are vital because long-tenured educators can get complacent. To stay competitive, our university departments need the funds to attract fresh go-getters to their faculties.

I can see other states seizing on a massive cut to use as leverage in the competition for students. Clearly, the proposal for university cuts is just too drastic. It's not as though we can make up for \$75 million by raising the price of Diet Coke in the library by 15 cents! The university buildings will fall behind in construction, but eventually, the work is still going to have to get done. The long-term effects can't be ignored. Ultimately, the damaging impacts would reverberate throughout our state economy and damage our state's reputation. Please consider what your proposal would do and help find a real-world solution for university funding that works.