

PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION ADVOCACY DAY 2017

Talking Points

1. A High-Quality, Debt-Free Future

Over 75% of the college students in America attend public colleges and universities.¹

Huge cuts to state funding are endangering our public higher education system.

The state has cut funding \$200 million since 2001, while the number of students has grown substantially. That means the legislature has cut state funding by 31% per student since 2001.

In dollar amounts, the state is providing \$3,000 less per student per year, and students and working families are paying \$4,000 more per year.²

1) *Support the Finish Line Grant*

- Bill provides one year free of tuition and fees after a student's first year.
- Co-sponsored by over 100 legislators, but we need their support in committee and on the floor to get this bill passed.
- **Bill Numbers: [H. 639](#), [S. 712](#) (See Attached Factsheet)**

2) *Fully Fund Campus Budgets and Collective Bargaining to Limit Tuition/Fee Increases*

- Another year of tuition and fee increases can be avoided if the legislature fully funds the budget requests made by the State Universities, Community Colleges, and UMass system and its portion of collective bargaining agreements (CBAs).
 - State Universities: \$270,428,529, including CBAs
 - UMass: \$538,638,000 + \$16,656,000 for CBAs
 - Community Colleges: \$289,968,831, including CBAs

3) *Commit to Debt-Free College through the Fair Share Tax Amendment or other funds*

- From 2001 to 2014, the number of students taking out loans went up from 54% to 75%, and the average loan amount went up 55% to \$29,038.³
- Our public universities risk losing their public mission to provide affordable, accessible higher education to working families who can't afford private colleges.
- Public higher ed is a public good and must be available as close to free as possible, but it risks becoming a private commodity accessible only to the rich.

¹ Department of Education (https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_303.70.asp)

² Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center (link below)

³ http://massbudget.org/report_window.php?loc=higher-education-funding-in-massachusetts.html

- We ask you to commit to a debt-free future by significantly increasing the annual budget for public higher education and state financial aid through revenues from the Fair Share Tax Amendment or other means.

2. Invest in Faculty/Staff and Campuses

Staffing levels of front-line workers have not kept up with the increasing numbers of students; this is leading to overwhelming workloads, very long hours, and increasing numbers of employees suffering from stress-related illnesses. Cuts to staff decrease services to students.

1) Support Adjunct Faculty, including pay equity, retirement and health care

- Adjunct and non-tenure track faculty are treated unequally on many of our campuses. They receive lower pay than full-time faculty for the same work.
- We must support adjunct faculty by ensuring pay equity with full-time faculty and have access to the same retirement and health care as other staff.
- **Bill Number:** [H. 639](#)

2) Fully Fund Campus Budgets

- Our public higher education system is educating many more first-generation, adult and lower-income people who need more support when it comes to debt, housing, transportation, affordability and academic success.
- Often, the State Budget provides less than the minimum amount requested by the colleges and universities. That practice must end. (Numbers on front)

3) Fully Fund All Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs)

- The State is not providing the amount of money for contracts that it promised when those contracts were signed. These costs are being passed on to students in various forms. The State must keep its promises and fully fund the collective bargaining agreements it made with campus workers. **Bill Number:** [H. 1434](#)

3. Protect Immigrant Students and Communities

Direct assaults on our immigrant neighbors and friends by this presidential administration are abhorrent. We will stand up to defend the rights of our immigrant neighbors and peers.

1) Protect DACA and other undocumented students attending public colleges

- This bill protects in-state tuition rates for undocumented students.
- **Bill Number:** [S. 669](#)

2) Prevent public colleges and universities from releasing student data

- This bill prevents universities from releasing private student data to anyone, including immigration services, without a valid legal order.
- **Bill Numbers:** [S. 704](#)