

PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION ADVOCACY DAY 2018

Talking Points

(1) #DebtFreeFuture for Current and Future Students

Huge cuts to state funding are making it impossible for students and families to afford college.

The state has cut funding by hundreds of millions of dollars since 2001, while the number of students has grown substantially, amounting to an over 33% per student cut.

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.

1. Policy: Pass the Finish Line Grant This Year

- Bill provides one year free of tuition and fees after a student's first year.
- Bipartisan support of over 120 lawmakers, but still not slated to pass.
- **Bill Numbers:** [H. 3000](#), [S. 712](#)

2. Policy: \$500 Million in New Annual Funds from the Fair Share Amendment

- Our public colleges and universities are failing in their public mission to provide affordable, accessible higher education to working families because of high cost.
- The [Fair Share Millionaire's Tax Amendment](#) on the ballot in November 2018 will raise almost \$2 billion, one-third of which is to support college affordability.
- Commit to a debt-free future by significantly increasing the annual budget for public higher education and state financial aid via the Fair Share Amendment.

(2) #DebtFreeFuture for Past Students and Alumni

1. Policy: Pass the Student Loan Borrowers Bill of Rights this year

- Student debt is the second largest form of debt in the country, totaling over \$1.5 trillion. Yet it is the only form of debt that can't be removed in bankruptcy.
- The Student Borrowers Bill of Rights would ensure that student loan servicers treat borrowers fairly and create a central office to address loan complaints.
- This bill that pushes back against the Trump Administration's attack on student borrowers, and state lawmakers can pass it this year with no budget impact.
- **Bill Numbers:** [H. 2173](#), [S. 129](#)

2. Policy: Support Student Debt Forgiveness Through Fair Share Amendment

- The student debt crisis costs Massachusetts nearly \$2 billion a year and crushes the dreams of students and families across our state.
 - While ensuring student borrowers basic rights is a first step, lawmakers must fund a student debt forgiveness program through the Fair Share Amendment.
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(3) Fund Public Colleges and Support Campus Workers

1. Policy: Meeting the campus budget requests in this year's state budget

- 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.

2. Policy: Fix Adjunct Faculty Health Insurance this year

- Adjunct and non-tenure track faculty are treated unequally on our campuses. They receive lower pay and lack access to benefits.
- Lawmakers must support adjunct faculty by passing the bill that would giving them equal access to health insurance this year.
- **Bill Number:** [H. 4153](#)