



An Act to guarantee debt-free public higher education

MTA Legislative Agenda, 2021-2022

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Jamie Eldridge (D-Acton) | Rep. Natalie Higgins (D-Leominster)

Creates a program to cover tuition and fees for all Massachusetts residents attending a MA public higher education institution as well as another program to further aid students eligible for Federal Pell Grants.

State funding for public higher education in Massachusetts has been cut drastically in the past 20 years, resulting in significant tuition and fee increases and one of the fastest-growing student debt burdens in the nation.

This bill would:

- Establish that it is the policy of Massachusetts to guarantee free public higher education as a right for all students.
- Create a grant program to pay the equivalent of tuition and mandatory fees to an eligible student at any Massachusetts public college or university, or certificate, vocational, or training program at a public institution.
- For students who meet the income eligibility for Federal Pell Grants, give additional aid in grants to cover the additional costs of attendance, including but not limited to, room and board, books and supplies, transportation, and personal expenses.
- Ensure that funds from this program do not affect eligibility for other state grants, gift aid, institutional aid, or federal aid including Pell Grants through the FAFSA process.

Passing An Act to guarantee debt-free public higher education means:

- Access to high-quality and affordable public higher education as a right, not a privilege.
- Greater socioeconomic diversity at public institutions.
- More people are able to complete their degrees without themselves and their families falling into financial distress.
- The overall economy of the Commonwealth is improved when more people have access to affordable public higher education programs.

**For more information please contact the MTA Government Relations Division
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