

H1055 – AN ACT TO INVEST IN HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY

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PURPOSE OF THIS BILL

This bill addresses a serious problem faced by our public higher education institutions today, particularly our community colleges: the over-reliance on part-time, adjunct faculty.

- Adjunct faculty members who teach at community colleges often teach at multiple campuses each semester. They have no additional campus responsibilities, such as counseling students or participating in faculty meetings. They are paid on a per course basis and have no health insurance or pension benefits. Many lack the most basic resources for their work, including office space, computer access, and instructional resources.
- Full-time, tenure or tenure-track community college faculty, on the other hand, generally teach five courses per semester, hold regular office hours, advise students, and participate in campus activities. Student enrollment has increased in recent years, which has resulted in a 23 percent increase in course sections at our community colleges since 2005. In the Massachusetts Community College system in 2010-2011, 67 percent of credit-bearing courses were taught by adjunct faculty, an increase of almost 34 percent since 2004-2005.*
- A lack of full-time, tenured, or tenure-track faculty can lead to a diminished quality of education, affecting students' ability to choose their course of study, finish degrees on time, and receive adequate counseling and mentoring services. From 2001 until 2015, state appropriations for public higher education have decreased by almost 30 percent when adjusted for inflation, while student enrollment in credit courses has increased by 17 percent between 2003 and 2011.*

*Most current data available

WHAT THIS BILL DOES

H1055 addresses this multi-faceted problem with solutions that will help our under-resourced adjuncts, while requiring reinvestment in full-time faculty:

- Requires that all part-time faculty who carry at least a 50 percent teaching load can obtain health insurance, that part-time faculty receive pay that is equal, on a pro rata basis, to that of full-time faculty, and be eligible for participation in the state retirement plan.
- Remedies the current over-reliance on adjunct faculty by requiring, by the school year beginning in 2021, all public higher education institutions increase the share of courses taught by full-time, tenure and tenure-track faculty so that at least 75 percent of three or more credit undergraduate courses offered on each campus be taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty.
- Increases the number of full-time faculty by requiring that current part-time faculty be given priority consideration for any future fulltime, tenure-track positions that become available.

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JUST THE FACTS

SUMMARY

The problem will not be resolved immediately, but we must begin to put together a plan that will move us to a high quality system that relies primarily on full-time, tenure and tenure-track faculty, while at the same time, improving the conditions for part-time and adjunct faculty.

There will always be an important role at our higher education institutions for adjunct faculty, such as those who provide work-force training, but the goal of any institution should be that no more than about 25 percent of faculty be adjunct faculty.