



# FUND OUR FUTURE



INVEST IN THE SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES OUR COMMUNITIES DESERVE

Fund Our Future is a grassroots campaign with the goal of passing legislation to increase state funding for public education by more than \$1.5 billion a year — more than \$1 billion for public schools and more than \$500 million for public higher education.

The full titles of the bills supported by the Fund Our Future campaign are:

▶ **Promise Act (SB238/HB586)** — An act providing rightful opportunities and meaningful investment for successful and equitable education

▶ **Cherish Act (SB741/HB1214)** — An act committing to higher education the resources to insure a strong and healthy public higher education system

## PreK-12 Funding

The 2015 Foundation Budget Review Commission found that the Commonwealth's public school funding formula is outdated — and that the foundation budget is too low by more than \$1 billion.

The *Promise Act*, filed by Sen. Sonia Chang-Díaz (D-Boston) and by Reps. Aaron Vega (D-Holyoke) and Mary Keefe (D-Worcester), would over a period of time implement the four core recommendations of the commission to increase the foundation budget, resulting in more than \$1 billion in new state funding. The bulk of those funds would go to districts with the greatest need and fewest resources. The formula would be changed to:

- Realistically account for districts' health care costs by using actual data to set insurance costs and inflation rates in the foundation budget.
- Modernize the formula to provide adequate support for English learners and low-income students.
- More accurately account for special education costs to better reflect actual SPED enrollment and the total costs that districts bear for out-of-district students.
- Increase state aid to certain districts to mitigate losses to charter schools.
- Guarantee minimum annual state aid increases to all districts of \$50 per pupil.

## Higher Education Funding

A recent report found that, accounting for inflation and changes in student enrollment, public higher education in Massachusetts has been cut by 31 percent since FY01. The same report found that the share of higher education costs borne by students and their families shifted dramatically over this same period, from approximately 30 percent in FY01 to approximately 55 percent in FY16.

The impacts of this chronic underfunding are keenly felt by both our students and our dedicated faculty and staff. The *Cherish Act*, filed by Sen. Jo Comerford (D-Northampton) and Reps. Sean Garballey (D-Arlington) and Paul Mark (D-Peru), would reaffirm the state's commitment to public higher education by:

- Implementing the core finding of the 2014 Higher Education Finance Commission, resulting in more than \$500 million in additional funding for public higher education. These new funds must supplement — not supplant — existing funding.
- Establishing in statute a fair and adequate minimum funding level for public higher education at no less than the FY01 per-student funding level, adjusted for inflation.
- Freezing tuition and fees for five years, as long as the Legislature appropriates the funds required to reach FY01 per-student funding levels in five years.

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