



The Cherish Act

MTA Legislative Agenda, 2021-2022

Lead Sponsors

Sen. Jo Comerford (D-Northampton) | Rep. Sean Garballey (D-Arlington) | Rep. Paul Mark (D-Peru)

Legislation to help insure a strong public higher education system

State funding for our community colleges, state universities and the UMass system has declined dramatically since 2001. This has led to staggering increases in tuition and fees; harmful reductions in staff, faculty, and programs; exploitative use of part-time staff, adjuncts and non-tenure-track faculty; and, among other problems, increasing sums of money being spent on capital debt service rather than on students, staff and vital programs.

This bill would:

- Establish a fair and adequate minimum funding level for public higher education at no less than the fiscal 2001 per-student funding level, adjusted for inflation.
- Require the state Board of Higher Education and the secretary of education to determine annual budget requests for public higher education institutions based on a fair and equitable formula.
- Give the Board of Higher Education and the secretary of education five years beginning in fiscal 2022 to restore funding to 2001 levels.
- Prohibit any tuition or fee increases for students enrolled at public colleges and universities between fiscal 2022 and fiscal 2026, as long as the state meets its funding commitment each year during the implementation period.

Passing *the Cherish Act* means:

- Ending the downward spiral in state funding for public higher education.
- Improving the quality of life in Massachusetts and supporting the state's economy.
- Addressing some of the causes of the crushing debt being placed on students and working families.
- Providing the ability to hire more full-time educators and improving working conditions for poorly paid adjuncts and professional staff.
- Improving the physical condition and technology of our campuses, which have undergone the deferral of care and maintenance for many years.
- Funding programs that support students from underserved populations and enhancing support for campuses with greater numbers of students of color and low-income students.

For more information, please contact the MTA Government Relations Division
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