

2025-2026 Legislative Agenda



H.1436/S.929 | *An Act relative to debt-free public higher education*

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

Every student should have the opportunity to attend college without going into debt. This bill would build on the recent investments made in our public higher education system and make it possible for all students to get a two- or four-year degree without working excessive hours or going into debt. The Fair Share surtax has provided us with the opportunity to create an engine for academic, career and personal growth for students, as well as a pipeline for the next generation of workers and civically engaged residents.

Today, more than 70 percent of all Massachusetts high school graduates who enroll in college attend one of our public higher education institutions, and 81 percent of all those who graduate from one of our public colleges and universities, stay to work and live in the Commonwealth.

More than half of our state residents have a bachelor's degree, but residents in Gateway Cities are 40 percent less likely to have one. Extending the opportunity to enroll and succeed in college to all students who want that path is critical to creating an economically and racially just society and a more dynamic economy.

This bill would:

- Create a first-dollar grant program to cover tuition and mandatory fees for Massachusetts residents attending public colleges in the state.
- Provide additional financial aid to our lowest-income residents to support the cost of attendance, including food and housing.
- Allow all residents of the Commonwealth to attend outstanding public institutions without taking on crippling debt.
- Enhance our knowledge-driven economy, as well as improve overall well-being in our state for generations to come.

Please contact MTA Government Relations if you have any questions or require any additional information.
governmentrelations@massteacher.org | 617.878.8119