



Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Higher Education
In Support of H.644, An Act relative to equal opportunity for high school graduates in the
Commonwealth
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This bill, H.644, would allow students who are not citizens and not legal permanent residents to pay in-state tuition and receive state-funded financial assistance at public institutions of higher education if they otherwise qualify. The bill addresses issues of immigration, education, income inequality, and equal opportunity.

Since the federal government continues to offer no constructive solutions for dealing with undocumented immigrants, through this bill Massachusetts has an opportunity to enable undocumented youth to become more productive members of society, as many other states have done, including California, New York, Connecticut, Florida, Texas.

The United States is a nation of immigrants, and the League of Women Voters has a long history of encouraging their participation in American society. Continuing their education will make them more likely to become active participants in our democracy.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) has made “equality and justice” a priority area for action. Giving these Massachusetts students a chance to afford college has a clear impact on their ability to improve their economic conditions and those of their families.

At UMass Amherst, for Massachusetts residents, full time undergraduates pay \$14,971 in annual tuition and fees, while out-of-state students pay \$32,204¹. At a community college such as MassBay, Massachusetts residents pay \$197 per credit while non-residents pay \$403².

The Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation has reviewed similar bills twice -- in 2006 and 2011 -- and found that these bills would be revenue positive³.

Right now, young people already in the US, educated K-12, and qualified to enter college are forced to pay out-of-state tuition at Massachusetts public colleges and universities. The higher cost is generally out of reach. This bill simply gives them access to the tuition and financial aid available to their fellow state high school graduates.

¹ <http://www.umass.edu/bursar/sites/default/files/Undergraduate-Rates-Fall%202016-Spring-2017.pdf>

² <http://www.massbay.edu/tuition-fees/>

³ [http://www.masstaxpayers.org/sites/masstaxpayers.org/files/In-state tuition.pdf](http://www.masstaxpayers.org/sites/masstaxpayers.org/files/In-state%20tuition.pdf)