



Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Higher Education
In Support of H.1061, An Act relative to equal opportunity for high school graduates in the
Commonwealth

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As the US Congress grapples with the larger issue of immigration, through this bill Massachusetts has an opportunity to enable undocumented immigrant youth to become more productive members of society, as many other states have done – including California, New York, Connecticut, Florida and Texas.

H.1061 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.

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 “addressing income inequality” one of its top areas of action priority. Giving these Massachusetts students a chance to afford college will have 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 \$14,171 in annual tuition and fees, while out-of-state students pay \$30,504¹. At a community college such as MassBay, Massachusetts residents pay \$184 per credit while non-residents pay \$390².

The Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation has reviewed such bills twice – in 2006 and 2011 – and found that such a bill 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 graduates.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts urges the members of the Joint Committee on Higher Education to give H.1061 a favorable report and work to make it law in Massachusetts.

Thank you for your consideration.

¹https://www.umass.edu/bursar/sites/default/files/Fall%202015-Spring%202016%20ugrad%20full%20time%20fee%20sheet_0.pdf

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

³<http://www.masstaxpayers.org/sites/masstaxpayers.org/files/In-state%20tuition.pdf>