



**Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Higher Education**

**In support of H.1239 An Act relative to equal opportunity for high school graduates in the Commonwealth,  
S.740 An Act providing access to higher education for high school graduates in the Commonwealth  
And H.1236/S.739 An Act to ensure tuition equity for Massachusetts residents**

**By Jennifer Muroff, LWVMA Immigration Specialist**

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Supporting higher education opportunities for undocumented youth is a priority for the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts this legislative session. These bills give every Massachusetts high school graduate, regardless of immigration status, access to the same rate of tuition at public colleges and universities within the Commonwealth.

Twenty states already offer in-state tuition rates for undocumented students: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, and Washington.<sup>1</sup>

Research indicates that, “tuition equity laws reduce high school drop-out rates, increase the number of graduates who pursue a college degree, and raise student incomes and tax contributions.”<sup>2</sup>

At UMass Amherst, residents pay \$16,278 in annual tuition and fees, while out-of-state students pay \$35,599.<sup>3</sup> At a community college such as MassBay, residents pay \$218 per credit while non-residents pay \$424.<sup>4</sup> In-state tuition rates would make college more affordable in the short term, and increase tax revenues in the long term, since college graduates would earn higher salaries.

LWVMA, representing 47 local Leagues from Cape Cod to the Berkshires, believes that all levels of government share the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education for all persons in the United States regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability. The League stands with immigrants and our partners in the immigrant rights community.

For all these reasons, the League supports these bills and asks that you favorably report a version of these bills to provide in-state tuition to undocumented students out of committee. Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nilc.org/issues/education/basic-facts-instate/> Updated June 2019

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nilc.org/issues/education/eduaccesstoolkit/toolkit-access-to-postsecondary-education-2/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.umass.edu/umfa/undergraduates/costs>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.massbay.edu/finance/tuition-and-fees>