



## Legislation Summary:

### **An Act to Ensure Tuition Equity for Massachusetts Residents (House)**

### **An Act Providing Access to Higher Education for High School Graduates in the Commonwealth (Senate)**

Initial bill number(s): H.1281/S.817/S.836

Sponsors: Rep. Moran, Rep. Madaro, Sen. Crighton, Sen. Miranda

#### **What the bill does, why LWVMA supports or opposes it, and the League position relative to this bill.**

This bill would allow students who attended high school in MA for at least three years, graduated from high school, or attained the equivalent GED to have access to in-state tuition rates at state colleges and universities, regardless of immigration status (as is the case in 23 other states and D.C.). The students can document their eligibility in several ways (e.g., SSN, TIN, register with the military) and show that they have applied or will apply for US citizenship. The Senate bill would also extend eligibility for state financial aid.

The bill would benefit both immigrant students and the MA economy. It would support students by providing equal access to higher education and a connection to the state, as well as a reason to stay here and enter the workforce. With cross-industry labor shortages and the decline in the number of college graduates, the bill would also help to ensure a steadier stream of workers and talent to support the economy and keep it competitive. Given that the MA university system is among the 15 states with the highest numbers of students without legal status<sup>1</sup> their inclusion in the workforce of the Commonwealth would be highly significant.

LWV positions:

*Impact on Issues*, p.14; *Where We Stand*, p. 45, “The League supports equal access to education employment, and housing.”

*Impact on Issues*, p. 122: “The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education, employment, and housing for all persons in the United States regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability.”

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, Jennifer, “Momentum building for removing another barrier for immigrants”, *Commonwealth Magazine*, April 30, 2023

