

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1260**

---

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Sean Garballey and Patricia A. Duffy***

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act committing to higher education the resources to insure a strong and healthy public higher education system.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>	<i>1/19/2023</i>
<i>Patricia A. Duffy</i>	<i>5th Hampden</i>	<i>1/19/2023</i>
<i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i>	<i>17th Worcester</i>	<i>1/23/2023</i>
<i>Steven Owens</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/23/2023</i>
<i>Manny Cruz</i>	<i>7th Essex</i>	<i>1/23/2023</i>
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/23/2023</i>
<i>Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr.</i>	<i>12th Hampden</i>	<i>1/24/2023</i>
<i>Rodney M. Elliott</i>	<i>16th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/24/2023</i>
<i>James C. Arena-DeRosa</i>	<i>8th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/24/2023</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>	<i>1/24/2023</i>
<i>Susannah M. Whipps</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>	<i>1/24/2023</i>
<i>Brian W. Murray</i>	<i>10th Worcester</i>	<i>1/25/2023</i>
<i>Steven Ultrino</i>	<i>33rd Middlesex</i>	<i>1/25/2023</i>
<i>Samantha Montaño</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>	<i>1/25/2023</i>
<i>Christine P. Barber</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Josh S. Cutler</i>	<i>6th Plymouth</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Frank A. Moran</i>	<i>17th Essex</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>

<i>Paul J. Donato</i>	<i>35th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Jessica Ann Giannino</i>	<i>16th Suffolk</i>	<i>1/27/2023</i>
<i>James K. Hawkins</i>	<i>2nd Bristol</i>	<i>1/27/2023</i>
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2023</i>
<i>Vanna Howard</i>	<i>17th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/31/2023</i>
<i>Margaret R. Scarsdale</i>	<i>1st Middlesex</i>	<i>1/31/2023</i>
<i>Ryan M. Hamilton</i>	<i>15th Essex</i>	<i>1/31/2023</i>
<i>Erika Uyterhoeven</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/2/2023</i>
<i>Tackey Chan</i>	<i>2nd Norfolk</i>	<i>2/2/2023</i>
<i>Paul McMurtry</i>	<i>11th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/2/2023</i>
<i>Mike Connolly</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/2/2023</i>
<i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>	<i>9th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/3/2023</i>
<i>Carol A. Doherty</i>	<i>3rd Bristol</i>	<i>2/3/2023</i>
<i>Adrian C. Madaro</i>	<i>1st Suffolk</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>William C. Galvin</i>	<i>6th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>Rebecca L. Rausch</i>	<i>Norfolk, Worcester and Middlesex</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>Michael D. Brady</i>	<i>Second Plymouth and Norfolk</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>Jon Santiago</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>Patrick M. O'Connor</i>	<i>First Plymouth and Norfolk</i>	<i>2/7/2023</i>
<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>	<i>2/7/2023</i>
<i>Christopher J. Worrell</i>	<i>5th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/7/2023</i>
<i>Natalie M. Blais</i>	<i>1st Franklin</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>Tricia Farley-Bouvier</i>	<i>2nd Berkshire</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>2/10/2023</i>
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>	<i>2/14/2023</i>
<i>James Arciero</i>	<i>2nd Middlesex</i>	<i>2/15/2023</i>
<i>Denise C. Garlick</i>	<i>13th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/15/2023</i>
<i>Simon Cataldo</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/15/2023</i>
<i>Joanne M. Comerford</i>	<i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i>	<i>2/21/2023</i>
<i>James J. O'Day</i>	<i>14th Worcester</i>	<i>2/21/2023</i>
<i>Daniel Cahill</i>	<i>10th Essex</i>	<i>2/23/2023</i>
<i>Christopher Richard Flanagan</i>	<i>1st Barnstable</i>	<i>2/27/2023</i>
<i>Mindy Domb</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>	<i>2/28/2023</i>
<i>Daniel R. Carey</i>	<i>2nd Hampshire</i>	<i>3/1/2023</i>
<i>Adam Scanlon</i>	<i>14th Bristol</i>	<i>3/6/2023</i>
<i>Michelle L. Ciccolo</i>	<i>15th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/6/2023</i>
<i>Michael P. Kushmerek</i>	<i>3rd Worcester</i>	<i>3/6/2023</i>
<i>Kathleen R. LaNatra</i>	<i>12th Plymouth</i>	<i>3/8/2023</i>
<i>Bruce J. Ayers</i>	<i>1st Norfolk</i>	<i>3/9/2023</i>

*Brandy Fluker Oakley*

*12th Suffolk*

*3/10/2023*

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1260**

By Representatives Garballey of Arlington and Duffy of Holyoke, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1260) of Sean Garballey, Patricia A. Duffy and others relative to committing to higher education the resources to insure a strong and healthy public higher education system. Higher Education.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court  
(2023-2024)**

An Act committing to higher education the resources to insure a strong and healthy public higher education system.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 15A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after  
2 section 15 the following section:-

3 Section 15A. It is the intention of the general court to assure fair and adequate funding  
4 for the commonwealth’s public institutions of higher education. Notwithstanding section 15B or  
5 any other general or special law to the contrary, the annual budget request for the public  
6 institutions of higher education shall be determined by the board of higher education and the  
7 secretary under this section for the University of Massachusetts, the state university system, the  
8 community college system, and needs-based financial assistance administered by the council  
9 under section 9B; provided, that in order to achieve equity for students and workers, the council  
10 shall allocate state appropriations to individual public colleges and universities in a manner  
11 which: (i) establishes scholarship funding in accordance with section 1 of this act; (ii)

12 emphasizes full-time over part-time employment and fair wages and benefits for adjunct faculty  
13 and staff; (iii) realigns resources toward teaching, research, and student supports; (iv) enhances  
14 the ability of colleges to provide support for students by providing an additional \$2,000 per  
15 eligible student to fund supports services to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable students,  
16 which may include, but shall not be limited to, low-income, first-generation, minority, and  
17 disabled students and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning students; (v)  
18 supports the full curricular offerings and research endeavors appropriate to each institution; (vi)  
19 provides up-to-date technology and other resources for student learning; and (vii) prioritizes  
20 public operation of our public campuses over privatization; provided further, that the council  
21 shall annually report the details of the funding distribution to the governor and to the house and  
22 senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on higher education; and  
23 provided further, that notwithstanding section 7H of chapter 29 of the General Laws or any other  
24 general or special law to the contrary, the governor shall submit to the general court annually a  
25 request for an appropriation based on the recommendations of the Public Higher Education  
26 Wage Equity and Working Conditions Commission, as created in Chapter \_\_\_\_ of the Acts of  
27 2023.

28 SECTION 2. Chapter 15A of the General Laws is hereby further amended by inserting,  
29 after section 45, the following section:-

30 Section 46. Green and Healthy Public College and University Building Planning  
31 Commission

32 (a) There shall be a Green and Healthy Public College and University Building Planning  
33 Commission, which shall consist of: the commissioner of higher education, who shall serve as

34 chair, or a designee; the commissioner of public health, who shall serve as vice chair, or a  
35 designee; the secretary of energy and environmental affairs, who shall serve as vice chair, or a  
36 designee; the speaker of the house of representatives, or a designee; the president of the senate,  
37 or a designee; the minority leader of the house of representatives, or a designee; the minority  
38 leader of the senate, or a designee; the chairs of the joint committee on ways and means, or their  
39 designees; the chairs of the joint committee on higher education, or their designees; the president  
40 of the university of Massachusetts, or a designee; the executive director of the Massachusetts  
41 Association of Community Colleges, or a designee; the executive officer of the Massachusetts  
42 State University Council of Presidents, or a designee; 4 representatives of the Massachusetts  
43 Teachers Association, 1 of whom shall be employed by the university of Massachusetts, 1 of  
44 whom shall be employed by a state university, and 1 of whom shall be employed by a  
45 community college; a representative of the American Federation of Teachers, Massachusetts; a  
46 representative of the American Institute of Architects-Massachusetts; a representative of the  
47 Massachusetts State Building Trades Council; a representative of the Massachusetts Coalition for  
48 Occupational Safety and Health; and a representative of the Massachusetts Department of Higher  
49 Education's Student Advisory Council.

50 (b) The commission shall assess and make recommendations for public higher education  
51 buildings relative to energy efficiency, spatial adequacy, life safety, accessibility, indoor  
52 environmental quality and public health. The commission shall be established not less than every  
53 10 years to monitor the implementation of its recommendations, and to conduct a new  
54 assessment if determined to be necessary by the commission.

55 (c) The commission shall determine the means of conducting its work, which shall  
56 include, but not be limited to:

57 (1) assessing the extent to which public higher education buildings in the commonwealth  
58 provide students a healthy environment that is conducive to learning while efficiently using  
59 energy and resources and limiting exposure to toxic building materials, referred to in this section  
60 as “green and healthy public higher education buildings”. Factors to be considered shall include,  
61 but not be limited to: (i) protection against infectious disease, including COVID-19 and  
62 influenza; (ii) sufficient ventilation and air circulation, including adequate outdoor air exchange,  
63 filtration and circulation; (iii) healthy indoor air quality, including limits on pollutants, exposure  
64 to toxic substances, chemical emissions and vapor intrusion; (iv) adequate availability of clean  
65 and safe water; (v) appropriate thermal comfort, humidity and temperature controls; (vi)  
66 protections against pests with effective use of integrated pest management; (vii) limits on  
67 pollutants, dust, mold and allergens; (viii) appropriate artificial lighting and plentiful natural  
68 light; (ix) proper acoustic and noise control; (x) proper maintenance of mechanical systems; (xi)  
69 design that promotes physical activity and meets accessibility standards; (xii) opportunities to  
70 increase energy efficiency and efficient use of resources including low-flow fixtures; (xiii)  
71 opportunities to shift to fossil-free fuels; (xiv) proper access to greenspace; and (xv)  
72 opportunities for architectural design to enhance occupant safety. The assessment may rely on  
73 existing data or be objectively measured. The assessment shall include a public searchable online  
74 dashboard with the findings for all public higher education buildings in the commonwealth; and

75 (2) developing standards for green and healthy public higher education buildings.

76 (d) Members of the commission shall not receive compensation for their services but may  
77 receive reimbursement for the reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out their responsibilities  
78 as members of the commission. The commissioner of higher education shall furnish reasonable  
79 staff and other support for the work of the commission.

80 SECTION 3. Section 16 of Chapter 15A is hereby amended by inserting after the  
81 eleventh paragraph the following paragraphs:

82 There shall be a debt free college scholarship program that creates a path for debt free  
83 college completion for all students, which shall include reasonable contributions from students  
84 and families. This program shall support pathways for lifelong learning, shall provide support to  
85 students enrolled in Massachusetts institutions of public higher education to earn professional or  
86 vocational certifications, associate, or baccalaureate degrees, and shall be administered without  
87 bias or undue burden whether students choose to directly enroll to earn four-year degrees or earn  
88 stackable certificates and degrees over time.

89

90 The program shall meet the following criteria:

91 (1) the department shall identify the full cost of attendance, including tuition, fees and  
92 living expenses, which include but are not limited to food and housing. Other costs to consider  
93 include childcare and transportation costs;

94 (2) the department shall require the student to make a reasonable contribution towards the  
95 full cost of attendance. This contribution may include Pell grants, existing institutional financial  
96 aid, a reasonable family contribution, and earnings from a reasonable amount of work. The  
97 calculation of reasonable family contribution shall address issues associated with the current  
98 calculation of Expected Family Contribution and shall examine individual circumstances; and

99 (3) the department shall provide state financial aid to fill the gap between resources  
100 available to students, as described in paragraph (2), and the total cost of attendance, which shall



101 include living expenses. State financial aid shall be sufficient to cover the cost of achieving up to  
102 a 4-year degree at a Massachusetts public higher education institution for in-state students of any  
103 age. Part-time students, those pursuing workforce training or vocational certificate degrees, and  
104 adults re-entering higher education also shall be eligible. Undocumented in-state residents shall  
105 be eligible to participate in the program, shall be charged in-state tuition, and shall be eligible for  
106 all other program benefits. If alternative processes are required to determine the financial needs  
107 of these students, the department shall develop such processes. The department shall also provide  
108 a path for debt free college for incarcerated students.

109 SECTION 4. Chapter 29 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after  
110 section 2QQQQQ the following 3 sections:-

111 Section 2RRRRR. Public College and University Capital Debt Relief Fund

112 (a) There shall be a separate fund, to be administered by the board of higher education,  
113 which shall be known as the Public College and University Capital Debt Relief Fund. The fund  
114 shall be credited with: (i) appropriations, bond proceeds or other money authorized or transferred  
115 by the general court and specifically designated to be credited to the fund; (ii) funds from public  
116 and private sources, including, but not limited to gifts, grants and donations; and (iii) any interest  
117 earned on such funds. Amounts credited to the fund shall be used, without further appropriation,  
118 to provide financial relief for debt service associated with capital construction projects at  
119 commonwealth institutions of public higher education, as defined in section 5 of chapter 15A;  
120 provided, however, that, students shall not be charged fees for that portion of the debt service  
121 paid out of the fund. The board of higher education, in consultation with the trustees of the  
122 university of Massachusetts, shall determine the amounts to be allocated to each public higher

123 education institution to cover debt service obligations; and provided further, that funds allocated  
124 from this reserve shall only be used to cover said debt service obligations and that public higher  
125 education institutions shall invest funds made available by relieving debt service obligations for  
126 hiring full-time faculty and staff, providing pay increases or other benefits for adjunct faculty,  
127 and in other student success programs including, but not limited to, additional supports for low-  
128 income students and students of color, using methods that improve the college experience and  
129 graduation rates.

130 Section 2SSSSS. Green and Healthy Public College and University Building Fund

131 (a) There shall be a separate fund, to be administered by the board of higher education,  
132 which shall be known as the Green and Healthy Public College and University Building Fund.  
133 The fund shall be credited with: (i) appropriations, bond proceeds or other money authorized or  
134 transferred by the general court and specifically designated to be credited to the fund; (ii) funds  
135 from public and private sources, including, but not limited to gifts, grants and donations; and (iii)  
136 any interest earned on such funds. Amounts credited to the fund shall be used, without further  
137 appropriation, to fund and implement the recommendations of the Green and Healthy Public  
138 College and University Building Planning Commission, established in section 46 of chapter 15A,  
139 for the renovation and rehabilitation of existing buildings and new building construction to meet  
140 the recommended green and healthy public higher education buildings standards.

141 Section 2TTTTT. Public Higher Education Wage Equity and Working Conditions Fund

142 (a) There shall be a separate fund, to be administered by the board of higher education,  
143 which shall be known as the Public Higher Education Wage Equity and Working Conditions  
144 Fund. The fund shall be credited with: (i) appropriations, bond proceeds or other money

145 authorized or transferred by the general court and specifically designated to be credited to the  
146 fund; (ii) funds from public and private sources, including, but not limited to gifts, grants and  
147 donations; and (iii) any interest earned on such funds. Amounts credited to the fund shall be  
148 used, without further appropriation, to fund and implement the recommendations of the Public  
149 Higher Education Wage Equity and Working Conditions Commission established by this section.

150 SECTION 5. Section 6 of said chapter 29 is hereby amended by adding the following  
151 paragraph:-

152

153 The operating budget in the current and ensuing fiscal years shall include the  
154 appropriation necessary to fund all incremental cost items for all years covered by any collective  
155 bargaining agreement to which either the board of trustees of the university of  
156 Massachusetts or the board of higher education is a party, separate and apart from any  
157 appropriation for the

158 general maintenance of the university or public institutions of higher education where the  
159 board of higher education is the employer for purposes of collective bargaining under chapter  
160 150E, excluding grant funded and auxiliary enterprises accounts funded positions.

161 SECTION 6. Chapter 32 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following  
162 section:-

163 Section 106. For purposes of this chapter and notwithstanding this chapter or any other  
164 general or special law, rule or regulation to the contrary, any employee who teaches the  
165 equivalent of at least 2 three-credit courses per semester or 4 three-or-more credit courses per

166 calendar year at 1 or more of the public institutions of higher education, including a division of  
167 continuing education, regardless of funding source, including but not limited to subsidiary  
168 account CC, or any staff working at 1 or more public institutions of higher education whose  
169 cumulative weekly hours worked at all campuses, including hours teaching courses if applicable,  
170 is half-time or more for two or more semesters per calendar year, shall be considered an  
171 employee eligible for membership in the state employees' retirement system and shall earn  
172 creditable service for such time and shall be regarded as regular compensation and shall be  
173 included in the salary on which deductions are to be paid to the annuity savings fund and the  
174 board shall credit as at least one-half year of service, actual service teaching at 1 or more public  
175 institutions of higher education the equivalent of at least 4 three-credit courses per calendar year;  
176 provided further, however, that said faculty and staff shall be eligible for the optional retirement  
177 system established in section 40 of chapter 15A.

178 SECTION 7. (a) There shall be a Public Higher Education Wage Equity and Working  
179 Conditions Commission, which shall consist of the following: the secretary of administration and  
180 finance, who shall serve as co-chair, or a designee; the commissioner of higher education, who  
181 shall serve as co-chair, or a designee; the speaker of the house of representatives, or a designee;  
182 the president of the senate, or a designee; the minority leader of the house of representatives, or a  
183 designee; the minority leader of the senate, or a designee; the chairs of the joint committee on  
184 ways and means, or their designees; the chairs of the joint committee on higher education, or  
185 their designees; the president of the university of Massachusetts, or a designee; the executive  
186 director of the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges, or a designee; the executive  
187 officer of the Massachusetts State University Council of Presidents, or a designee; 3  
188 representatives of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, 1 of whom shall be employed by the

189 university of Massachusetts, 1 of whom shall be employed by a state university, and 1 of whom  
190 shall be employed by a community college; a representative of the American Federation of  
191 Teachers, Massachusetts; a representative of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO; a representative of  
192 AFSCME Council 93; the student member of the board of higher education; a representative of  
193 the Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages; a representative of  
194 the Graduate Employee Organization; and a representative of the Massachusetts Education  
195 Justice Alliance.

196 (b) The commission shall determine the means of conducting its work, which shall  
197 include, but not be limited to: (1) assessing the salaries and working conditions of employees of  
198 private institutions of higher education in the commonwealth, as well as employees of public  
199 higher education institutions nationwide, and making recommendations to ensure that  
200 commonwealth public higher education employee salaries and benefits are at least commensurate  
201 with those other employees; (2) identifying programs, services and salaries that shall help to  
202 recruit and retain high quality faculty and staff at institutions of public higher education with a  
203 focus on prioritizing the recruitment and retention of a racially, culturally, ethnically and  
204 linguistically diverse workforce; (3) ensuring that there are sufficient full-time faculty and staff  
205 to provide reasonable workloads so educators can provide all students with the support they need  
206 to thrive; (4) identifying programs and methods to enhance faculty and staff professional  
207 development including, but not limited to, creating improved employee tuition waiver benefits  
208 for faculty and staff who enroll in institutions of public higher education; (5) performing an  
209 analysis looking at equity by race, gender, and other non-dominant identities, in all faculty and  
210 staff positions, by examining all wages and benefits and inequities that arise for any other reason;  
211 (6) recommend a base salary for faculty that would allow faculty to support themselves and their

212 families without being required to teach additional courses beyond a full course load; (7)  
213 recommend a base salary for professional and classified staff salaries to the salaries that would  
214 allow them to support themselves and their families; and (8) recommend a base salary for  
215 adjunct faculty that would allow faculty to support themselves and their families without being  
216 required to teach additional courses beyond a full course load, including the cost of health  
217 insurance and retirement security.

218         The Commission shall issue budgetary recommendations and submit legislation to  
219 implement their findings not later than December 31, 2023. The commission should be made up  
220 of representatives from student groups, campus administrations, unions representing campus  
221 faculty and staff, equity focused community groups and designees from the House, Senate, and  
222 the executive offices of administration and finance and education.

223         SECTION 8. For the fiscal years 2024 through 2028, inclusive, no tuition or fees shall  
224 increase for students enrolled at commonwealth public institution of higher education in any  
225 fiscal year where the appropriation for public institutions of higher education is at least the  
226 amount requested by the council, as provided in section 15A of chapter 15A of the General  
227 Laws.

228         SECTION 9. Notwithstanding section 8 of chapter 32A of the General Laws or any other  
229 general or special law to the contrary, the cost of fringe benefits, including, but not limited to, the  
230 cost of pensions and health insurance, associated with employees of a public institution of higher  
231 education as defined in section 5 of chapter 15A, shall be the obligation of the commonwealth,  
232 excluding grant funded and auxiliary enterprises accounts funded positions.

233 SECTION 10. Notwithstanding any general or special law, rule or regulation to the  
234 contrary, after January 1, 2023, the costs associated with the construction of an academic,  
235 administrative or auxiliary building at a commonwealth institution of public higher education, as  
236 defined in section 5 of chapter 15A of the General Laws, shall be paid in full by the  
237 commonwealth from state funds or eligible federal funds and shall not be paid for with any  
238 public higher education institutional funds or financed through public building authorities or  
239 private entities; provided, however, that the costs associated with the assessment, upgrade or  
240 repair of any existing academic, administrative or auxiliary building at an institution of public  
241 higher education that is under the control and supervision of the department of capital asset  
242 management and maintenance shall be paid in full by the commonwealth.

243 SECTION 11. The Green and Healthy Public College and University Building Planning  
244 Commission, as established in section 46 of chapter 15A of the General Laws, shall create and  
245 recommend a plan for all existing and new public higher education buildings to equitably meet  
246 the standards for green and healthy public higher education buildings developed pursuant to  
247 paragraph (c) of section 46 of said chapter 15A, by 2035. The commission shall issue  
248 recommendations, including an analysis that summarizes the findings of its assessment of public  
249 higher education buildings in the commonwealth, for implementing green and healthy public  
250 higher education buildings standards for cost-effective renovation and rehabilitation of existing  
251 buildings and for new building construction, and a plan for implementing these standards for all  
252 public higher education buildings, by 2035. The recommendations shall prioritize addressing  
253 buildings with the greatest needs first. The recommendations shall consider the unique  
254 environmental conditions of buildings located in urban, industrial, and other areas facing  
255 particular site challenges and shall consider the need to address historic patterns of injustice and

256 inequity in public higher education. The recommendations shall estimate the cost of bringing all  
257 buildings into compliance with the standards by 2035, including the ongoing cost of maintenance  
258 and repair, and recommend a plan to fund these costs, and shall also compare those costs with  
259 long-term savings in health and medical costs, energy costs, maintenance, life cycle assessment  
260 and other savings, and the growth in economic activity of bringing buildings to the standards,  
261 including increased jobs and job training. The first plan of the commission shall be published and  
262 submitted to the joint committee on ways and means and the joint committee on higher education  
263 not later than December 31, 2024. Prior to completing its assessment and issuing its  
264 recommendations, the commission shall conduct public hearings at every commonwealth  
265 institution of public higher education and shall consult with employee organizations, as defined  
266 in chapter 150E, representing employees at each institution of public higher education.

267           SECTION 12. The department of higher education shall implement the debt free  
268 program outlined in Section 3 of this Act for all students at community colleges in fiscal year  
269 2024 and for all students at four-year Massachusetts public higher education institutions in fiscal  
270 year 2025.

271           SECTION 13. (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the board  
272 of higher education shall establish a 5-year funding schedule, beginning in fiscal year 2024, to  
273 provide the level of funding needed to implement all provisions of this Act; to assure fair and  
274 adequate funding for the commonwealth public institutions of higher education, which shall  
275 include needs-based financial assistance developed under section 15B of chapter 15A of the  
276 General Laws; and shall be adjusted to recognize the fixed costs of those institutions.  
277 Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the budget request to the secretary of  
278 administration and finance for the system of institutions of public higher education and needs-



279 based financial assistance developed under said section 15B shall be not less than the amount  
280 determined by said schedule. The council shall submit its annual budget request to the secretary  
281 of administration and finance, the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint  
282 committee on higher education.

283 (b) Notwithstanding section 7H of chapter 29 of the General Laws or any other general or  
284 special law to the contrary, effective for fiscal years starting in fiscal year 2024, the governor  
285 shall submit to the general court annually a request for an appropriation that complies with the  
286 funding requirements of this section and section 15A of chapter 15A of the General Laws. Said  
287 appropriation request shall not propose any direct or indirect reductions in any other state  
288 appropriation including, but not limited to, collective bargaining agreements under chapter 150E,  
289 scholarships and need-based financial assistance authorized by said chapter 15A.