



CITY OF EASTHAMPTON OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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WHEREAS: it has come to the attention of the City Council that the Joint Committee on Higher Education is considering H.1339/S.829, [An Act to Guarantee Debt-Free Public Higher Education](#); and

WHEREAS, while the federal government has the authority to cancel all outstanding debts, state legislatures have the ability to prevent future debts; and

WHEREAS: since FY01, per-student spending on public higher education has been [cut by](#) 32% and state scholarship spending has also been [cut by](#) 32%, increasing the burden on students and their families who now pay more than 50% of total public college revenue across the Commonwealth's community colleges, state universities, and UMass campuses; and

WHEREAS, student debt in Massachusetts is disproportionately a public college problem as public college students graduate with almost equivalent dollars of student debt as private college graduates and more public college students graduate with debt in MA than private college students; and

WHEREAS, in Massachusetts in 2017, the average Cost of Attendance at public colleges accounts for an average of only 21% of white household income, but accounts for 38% of Black household income and 43% of Latinx household income; and

WHEREAS: women hold nearly two-thirds of the country's student loan debt, which totals \$1.7 trillion dollars, and women are often forced to pay back their student loans at a slower rate than men due to the gender pay gap, which can result in women paying more than men overall for their right to learn; and

WHEREAS, that the City Council go on record in enthusiastic support of H.1339/S.829, An Act to Guarantee Debt-Free Public Higher Education, and in urging the Joint Committee on Higher Education to advance the bill as quickly as possible; The Act is a systemic solution to the related crises of college unaffordability and student loan debt which will guarantee tuition-and- fees free public college and award additional cost-of-living grant money to low-income families to eliminate the need to borrow for housing, transportation, child care, etc;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Easthampton City Council offers its support for H.1339/S.829 An Act to Guarantee Debt-Free Public Higher Education and that we continue to elevate the voices of students and families living with the burden of student debt.

Approved this 16th day of March, 2022.

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