

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 1108

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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In the Year Two Thousand Nine  
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An Act providing free tuition to firefighters at State Universities..

*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 19. There shall be a single tuition waiver program administered by the council in  
2   accordance with guidelines established by the council to govern the program, provided that no  
3   tuition waiver be funded by the transfer of funds appropriated pursuant to section sixteen.

4           Such guidelines (i) shall establish institutional waiver allocation formulas and eligibility  
5   requirements, including needs criteria, for designated waiver programs, (ii) shall provide full or  
6   partial tuition waivers for specific categories of students designated by the council which may  
7   include veterans, armed forces personnel, senior citizens, and graduate students, (iii) may  
8   provide full or partial waivers for additional categories of students not included in clause (ii), and  
9   (iv) may provide full or partial waivers of tuition or fees for undergraduate programs, summer  
10   sessions, evening classes, or any specific courses or set of courses.

11          Such guidelines shall provide tuition and fee waivers for Massachusetts National Guard  
12   members. The commonwealth, not the institutions of public higher education, shall bear the cost  
13   of such tuition and fee waivers for Massachusetts National Guard members.

14 Tuition waivers for graduate students shall be administered by each institution of public  
15 higher education. Said institutions shall annually and on a date specified by the council submit a  
16 written report to the board detailing graduate student waiver policies and distributions of said  
17 waivers.

18 Upon the adoption of guidelines in accordance with the provisions of this section the  
19 council shall file copies of thereof with the clerks of the house and the senate, who shall refer  
20 such guidelines to the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee  
21 on education, arts and humanities.

22 The council shall annually on or before March fifteenth report to the house and senate  
23 committees on ways and means and to the joint committee on education, arts and humanities  
24 regarding any modifications to the guidelines setting forth tuition waiver programs. Said report  
25 shall include information relative to tuition waivers for graduate students as administered by the  
26 several institutions of public higher education.

27 Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, the board of  
28 higher education shall provide full tuition waivers at each community college for students who  
29 are clients of and who meet the eligibility requirements of the Massachusetts rehabilitation  
30 commission or the Massachusetts commission for the blind.

31 Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, the board of  
32 higher education shall provide full tuition waivers for any state-supported course offered by an  
33 institution at a public college or university, excluding graduate courses and courses in the MD  
34 program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, and including courses toward an  
35 undergraduate degree program, certificate program, short-term certificate program and noncredit

36 courses at each community college, state college and undergraduate campus of the University of  
37 Massachusetts for students who are not over the age of 24 and who, while in the custody of the  
38 department of social services, were adopted by an eligible Massachusetts resident or  
39 commonwealth employee as determined by the department of social services in conjunction with  
40 the human resources division.

41         The board of higher education shall, subject to appropriation, establish a program to  
42 provide grants to residents of the commonwealth who are working as paraprofessionals in public  
43 schools of the commonwealth while pursuing a bachelor's degree at a public college or  
44 university in the commonwealth in order to become a certified teacher in the commonwealth.  
45 Eligibility shall be limited to persons (a) who have worked as a paraprofessional in the public  
46 schools of the commonwealth for a minimum period of 2 years before receipt of such grant, or  
47 who are paraprofessionals who have worked in public schools for a lesser time, and (b) who are  
48 enrolled in and pursuing courses of study that will lead to certification as a teacher in bilingual  
49 education, special education, math, science or foreign languages, and (c) who commit to teach  
50 and actually teach for such period as the board of higher education may determine in the public  
51 schools of the commonwealth upon graduation and certification under section 38G of chapter 71.  
52 The board of higher education shall establish guidelines governing implementation of the  
53 program. Such guidelines shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (i) the level of  
54 academic achievement grant recipients must maintain while participating in the grant program;  
55 (ii) the financial responsibilities of grant recipients should they fail to complete their teacher  
56 certification; and (iii) the duties and obligations of grant recipients upon completion of  
57 certification, including the minimum number of years that they shall be required to work as a

58 teacher in a public school of the commonwealth. Such grants shall be used to defray the cost of  
59 tuition and fees at a public college or university in the commonwealth.

60 Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, the board of  
61 higher education shall provide full tuition waivers for any state-supported course offered by an  
62 institution at a public college or university, including courses toward an undergraduate degree  
63 program, certificate program, short-term certificate program and noncredit courses at each  
64 community college, state college and undergraduate campus of the University of Massachusetts,  
65 for all professional firefighters employed full-time in the Commonwealth, by a municipality or  
66 by a federal agency, and their spouses and dependents.