

HOUSE No. 1262

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Sean Garballey

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 relative to community college affordability.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>	<i>1/18/2023</i>
<i>Joanne M. Comerford</i>	<i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i>	<i>2/21/2023</i>
<i>Rodney M. Elliott</i>	<i>16th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/27/2023</i>

HOUSE No. 1262

By Representative Garballey of Arlington, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1262) of Sean Garballey, Joanne M. Comerford and Rodney M. Elliott relative to community college affordability. Higher Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act relative to community college affordability.

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. Section 19 of chapter 15A of the General Laws is hereby amended by
2 adding the following paragraph:-

3 Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, tuition and fee waivers under this section
4 for students attending community college shall include courses that are not state-supported,
5 including summer sessions, evening classes and online courses.

6 SECTION 2. Chapter 69 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
7 section 1T the following section:-

8 Section 1U. (a) Before graduating from high school, each student shall complete and
9 submit a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) form.

10 (b) A student shall not be required to comply with subsection (a) if the student’s parent or
11 guardian, or school counselor submits a signed waiver form indicating that the parent or guardian

12 understands the use and benefits of a FAFSA and declines to complete and submit a free FAFSA
13 form; provided, that a student over age 18 may sign such waiver on the student's own behalf.

14 (c) The commissioner of the department of elementary and secondary education shall
15 determine procedures to implement this section, including any forms necessary under subsection
16 (b). The procedures shall include processes to ensure compliance with federal law regarding
17 confidentiality of family financial information and student educational information, including the
18 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. Section 1232g), and any other
19 state or federal law relating to the privacy of student information. The commissioner shall direct
20 high schools to provide information to students and parents on the value of completing the
21 FAFSA form, including an explanation to each high school senior of the state-sponsored
22 scholarships, financial aid and assistance available to students attending college or post-
23 secondary education.

24 (d) The department of elementary and secondary education shall work with the office of
25 student financial assistance of the department of higher education to inform high school students
26 prior to their senior year on the availability of financial assistance for college and other post-
27 secondary education and the role of the FAFSA form in accessing the assistance.

28 (e) Each school district shall report to the department of elementary and secondary
29 education (i) the number of students who completed and submitted a financial aid application
30 under subsection (a) and (ii) the number of students who received an exception from complying
31 with subsection (a) under subsection (b). The department shall annually report data collected
32 under this subsection, along with an analysis of the data, including trends. The report and

33 analysis shall be provided to the secretary of education, the commissioner of higher education,
34 the joint committee on education and shall be posted on the website of the department.

35 (f) The department of elementary and secondary education shall establish an advisory
36 committee to advise the department in implementing this section. The advisory committee shall
37 be composed of persons representing: (i) high school counselors; (ii) high school teachers and
38 administrators; (iii) high school students and parents; (iv) higher education admissions and
39 financial aid staff, from all segments of public higher education and private higher education
40 institutions; and (v) the department of higher education. In implementing this section, the
41 commissioner shall review the implementation of similar requirements in other states.

42 SECTION 3. The department of higher education, in consultation with department of
43 elementary and secondary education, the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority, and
44 the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges shall develop materials, including an
45 informational pamphlet and web site, to inform high school juniors and seniors of affordable and
46 accessible higher educational opportunities, particularly opportunities at public community
47 colleges. The materials shall include information highlighting the ease of the application process,
48 including online applications and applications that do not require an application fee. The
49 materials shall provide information on the availability of financial aid and the financial aid
50 application process. The materials shall include a map showing the location of community
51 colleges in the commonwealth.

52 The materials may include other information as determined by the department of higher
53 education. In preparing the materials, the department of higher education shall consult with
54 admissions and financial aid counselors at community colleges and students in high school and

55 community college from various regions of the commonwealth. The online materials shall
56 include a form to allow students and parents to request further information and provide feedback
57 regarding the web site.

58 The department of elementary and secondary education shall distribute the materials to
59 all high school juniors and seniors in the commonwealth.