

Joint Committee on Higher Education Bill
Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	S.918
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act expanding access to higher education tuition and fee waivers for adopted foster children
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senator Comerford
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H.1431
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	S.815 of the 2023/2024 Legislative Session was redrafted as S.2674 and reported favorably by the Joint Committee on Higher Education, then referred to Senate Ways and Means, after which no further action was taken.
<u>SUMMARY</u>	When a family adopts a child from the foster care system, the child is entitled under Massachusetts law to free tuition at state universities, colleges, and community colleges. However, a loophole in the state’s financial aid system has meant that this tuition waiver does not cover courses taught at night or by faculty who are not full time. This bill allows students to use financial aid tuition and fee waivers for any course offered by a state institution of higher education and clarifies existing law to ensure that children who are in the custody of the Department of Children and Families are also eligible for full tuition and fee waivers.

SECTION-BY-SECTION

Section 1: Amends section 19 of chapter 15A to allow tuition and fee waivers to be provided for any course, not just “state-supported” courses, offered by public institutions of higher learning for students adopted from DCF, excluding graduate and MD courses at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center.

Section 2: Further amends section 19 of chapter 15A to ensure that persons in the custody of DCF are provided with **full** tuition and fee waivers.