

Resolution in Support of Public Higher Education in Massachusetts

- WHEREAS:** Community colleges, state universities, and the University of Massachusetts system play an integral role in fostering the public good in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and
- WHEREAS:** Public colleges and universities provide education and career training that create pathways for social and economic mobility, thereby reducing inequality among Massachusetts residents; and
- WHEREAS:** Public colleges and universities are major employers across the state, and students attending these institutions generate significant economic activity in their communities, including in Somerville; and
- WHEREAS:** Hundreds of Somerville residents, particularly first-generation college students, immigrants, and working families, rely on public higher education as an affordable and accessible pathway to opportunity; and
- WHEREAS:** Many Somerville graduates go on to attend Massachusetts community colleges, state universities, and UMass, and their success strengthens our city's civic life, workforce, and economic vitality; and
- WHEREAS:** Public higher education produces a highly trained and educated workforce that strengthens businesses, industries, and innovation in Massachusetts; and
- WHEREAS:** Public colleges and universities in Massachusetts conduct research and scholarship that benefit not only residents of the Commonwealth, but people throughout the world; and
- WHEREAS:** The cost of higher education must not be prohibitive for students, nor should pursuing a degree require taking on debilitating debt; and
- WHEREAS:** Public colleges and universities are experiencing disruptions in funding, as federal research grants are paused or canceled, and the federal budget under consideration proposes severe reductions in Pell Grant funding, which students rely on to pay for college; and
- WHEREAS:** Massachusetts voters overwhelmingly approved the Fair Share surtax on income above \$1 million to generate revenue specifically for public education and transportation; **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**
- RESOLVED:** That the Somerville City Council voices its strong support for Massachusetts' community colleges, state universities, and the University of Massachusetts system; and **BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: That the Somerville City Council urges the Massachusetts Legislature to dedicate at least \$200 million from the more than \$2 billion generated annually by the Fair Share surtax as a first step toward stabilizing public higher education funding for students, faculty, and staff; and **BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: That the Somerville City Council calls on the Legislature and the Governor to strategically increase long-term funding for public colleges and universities to reduce reliance on grants, privatization, tuition, and student fees; and **BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: That the Somerville City Council affirms its support for a vision of public higher education in Massachusetts that is debt-free for students and that provides competitive salaries and benefits necessary to retain and attract the faculty and staff required to sustain the quality of education our residents deserve; and **BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: That the Somerville City Council will transmit this resolution to the members of Somerville's state legislative delegation and to the Governor, urging their strong support for robust, equitable, and debt-free public higher education in Massachusetts.