

A Resolution in Support of Higher Education for All

WHEREAS, Massachusetts public colleges and universities are among the state's greatest resources; and

WHEREAS, Higher education is an important pathway to economic mobility for Somerville residents and those that graduate from public university are much more likely to remain in Massachusetts after graduation, to start families and contribute to the local economy; and

WHEREAS, Public colleges and universities educate the majority of students of color and first-generation college students across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Supreme Court's destructive decision on affirmative action threatens to undermine educational access to students of color, exacerbating the significant opportunity gaps demonstrated by lower college enrollments and completions, particularly for Latino and Black students; and

WHEREAS, More than 60 percent of Somerville Public School students are students of color that may have previously benefited from affirmative action in higher education, including more than 65 percent of Somerville High School students, according to the Massachusetts Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, 41.3 percent of Somerville High School graduates plan to attend a 2- or 4-Year Public College, compared to the 25.9 percent that plan to attend a private institution, as of the 2022-2023 school year, according to the Massachusetts Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, The Massachusetts Legislature is currently considering the Cherish Act, which would establish an equitable formula for public colleges and universities, prohibit any tuition or fee increases for students enrolled there for the next four years, and enhance support for campuses with greater numbers of students of color and low-income students; and

WHEREAS, The Somerville City Council believes that investing in our public higher education institutions means investing in the students, faculty and staff who are woven into our community;
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, That the Somerville City Council urges the Legislature to pass the Cherish Act and that a copy of this resolution shall forthwith be sent to the state legislative delegation.