



AN ACT EXPANDING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION TUITION AND FEE WAIVERS FOR ADOPTED FOSTER CHILDREN

[S.918](#) Sen. Comerford / [H.1431](#) Rep. Garballey



SUMMARY

Aligns existing law with legislative intent to provide full tuition and fee waivers at public higher education institutes for youth adopted from DCF and youth in DCF custody for all courses.



STATISTICS

With a four year degree, youth in foster care could expect to earn approximately \$481,000 more, on average, over the course of their work-life than if they had only a high school diploma. ([National Working Group on Foster Care and Education, 2014](#))

Students in foster care have the highest dropout rate in higher education institutions compared to all other groups that have data collected by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. ([DESE, 2024](#))

Foster youth are much less likely to complete a degree program than low income, first-generation students. ([Okpych & Courtney, 2023](#))

BILL SOLUTIONS

- (1) students can use financial aid tuition and fee waivers for any course offered by a state higher education institution.
- (2) clarifies that youth in DCF custody are also eligible for full tuition and fee waivers.

WHY IT'S NEEDED

Two issues currently impede the existing law's intent: (1) a loophole in the state's financial aid system has prevented this tuition waiver from covering courses taught at night or by faculty who are not full time; (2) it could be interpreted as not applying to youth in DCF custody.

The Children's League of Massachusetts ([CLM](#)) is a non-profit association of children and family service providers advocating for public policies and quality services that are in the best interest of children, youth, and families across the Commonwealth.