



State Universities
of Massachusetts

November 17, 2023

Dear Members of the FY23 Supplemental Budget Conference Committee:

As the nine Presidents of the Massachusetts State Universities, we write regarding the public higher education collective bargaining agreements pending in the FY 2023 supplemental appropriations bill.

As you know, the supplemental appropriations bill includes three state university labor contracts (MSCA, AFSCME and APA), along with nearly one hundred other state employee labor contracts. These labor contracts require legislative action before salary increases can be applied to unit member paychecks.

Our public higher education institutions are among the best in the country, and we have a workforce devoted to the mission of providing equitable access to high-quality public education for the Commonwealth's residents. Our dedicated faculty and staff are committed to preparing students for professional careers, lifelong learning, and civic engagement by providing a strong grounding in the liberal arts, a rigorous academic curriculum, and transformative opportunities, including undergraduate research, international study, internships, and service-learning opportunities. Together, the state universities enroll approximately 45,000 students with over 90% of our students coming from Massachusetts high schools. Our graduates are the backbone of the Massachusetts economic infrastructure with 85% of our graduates choosing to live and work in Massachusetts as future leaders in their industries and communities.

The state university presidents cannot thank our faculty and staff enough for their continued dedication to our students and our universities as we worked through some of the most challenging years of our careers. It is regrettable that over the past several years public sector workforce wages have declined dramatically. Annual cost of living increases have not kept pace with inflation, putting tremendous financial stress on our workforce. As a result, all our campuses are struggling to recruit and retain the high quality and diverse workforce that our students deserve.

We are grateful to the Administration for investing in our talented and expert employees by issuing financial parameters that recognize the inflationary conditions facing our workforce. Our faculty and staff deserve wage increases that reflect the high costs of living in our state and reward their dedication to public service.

The State Universities Council of Presidents urge you to resolve the difference between the House and Senate versions of the supplemental budget as expeditiously as possible. Since we are not permitted to provide unit members with contractual salary increases until legislative action has been completed, it is critical that the spending bill be taken up at the next possible informal session so our campuses may provide the equitable salary increases to our workforce before the end of the year.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and your support of your state universities.

Respectfully,



John D. Keenan, President
Salem State University

Chair, State Universities Council of Presidents



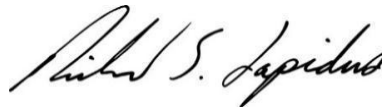
James F. Birge, President
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts



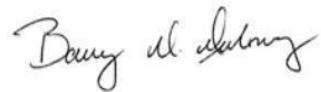
Frederick W. Clark, President
Bridgewater State University



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