

##Public University Tuition Reform and Student Debt Cancellation Act

###An Act to reform the public university system in the Atlantic Commonwealth, to make university a more accessible option to all, and to alleviate the burden of student debt from millions of residents of the Atlantic Commonwealth.

WHEREAS [**high student loan debt can have a devastating impact on the lives of students,**](<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/personal-finance/100515/10-ways-student-debt-can-destroy-your-life.asp>)

WHEREAS [**the price of a university education is increasing at a rapid rate,**](<https://www.forbes.com/sites/camilomaldonado/2018/07/24/price-of-college-increasing-almost-8-times-faster-than-wages/>)

WHEREAS a college education is becoming increasingly necessary in the modern job market,

WHEREAS [**7.1 million residents of the Atlantic Commonwealth have student loan debt,**](<https://educationdata.org/student-loan-debt-by-state>)

The People of the Atlantic Commonwealth, represented in Assembly, do enact as follows:

§ I. Short Title and Severability

1. This Act may be titled the “Public University Tuition Reform and Student Debt Cancellation Act.”

2. The provisions of this Act are severable; if one part is found to be unconstitutional, then that part will be struck and the rest of the Act will remain in force.

§ III. Definitions

1. The following terms shall have the following meanings—

I. "Atlantic Secretary of Labor, Education, Health, and Human Services" means the executive of the Department of Labor, Education, Health, and Human Services; or the Governor or Lieutenant Governor discharging the duties thereof.

II. "Public universities" mean institutions of higher education accredited by the Department of Labor, Education, Health, and Human Services; including but not limited to colleges, community colleges, and trade schools.

****§ III. Findings****

****1.** The Assembly finds:**

> ****I.**** That \$37 billion will be the cost to cover the lost tuition revenues of public universities within the Atlantic Commonwealth in 2021. This value was calculated by summing the total tuition among the regions that comprise the Atlantic Commonwealth in the 2017-2018 school year, utilizing [****the National Center for Education Statistics'** calculations******](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_333.20.asp?current=yes), then multiplying that value (\$33.992 billion) by 1.08 to account for an estimated 8% inflation between 2017 and 2021. The end value has been rounded up for error.

> ****II.**** That the amount of student loan debt within the Atlantic Commonwealth is \$254.9 billion. This value was calculated by combining the [****total student loan debt in each of the regions****](<https://educationdata.org/student-loan-debt-by-state>) of the Atlantic Commonwealth.

> ****III.**** That a sudden \$256 billion addition to the Atlantic budget would be an overwhelming burden to the budget, causing unnecessary issues within the Atlantic Commonwealth.

****§ IV. Public University Tuition Reform****

****1.**** All public universities within the Atlantic Commonwealth will be barred from charging their students tuition for attendance.

****2.**** The Atlantic Secretary of Labor, Education, Health, and Human Services shall distribute increased funds to all public universities within the Atlantic Commonwealth so as to provide a replacement to lost tuition revenue.

****3.**** In the 2021 budget, an additional \$37 billion will be distributed by the Atlantic Department of Labor, Education, Health, and Human Services to public universities within the Atlantic Commonwealth to cover lost tuition revenue and to facilitate continued operation.

****§ VStudent Debt Cancellation****

****1.**** The Atlantic Secretary of Labor, Education, Health, and Human Services is ordered to open the Student Loan Forgiveness Program, wherein individuals of the Atlantic Commonwealth that have outstanding student loan debt may apply in tandem with the entity that owns their student loan debt to have their student loan debt forgiven.

****2.**** Only those who have resided in the Atlantic Commonwealth for at least four (4) years may apply to the Student Loan Forgiveness Program.

****3.**** With a combined \$254.9 billion in student loan debt in the Atlantic Commonwealth, \$64 billion is appropriated to the Department of Labor, Education, Health, and Human Services for each of the next four years out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated for use in forgiving student loans in the Student Loan Forgiveness Program. Student loan forgiveness in each year is distributed on a “first come first serve” basis. If an individual and the entity that owns their student loan debt applies for student loan forgiveness in a year that has already seen its \$64 billion utilized, then they will be earmarked for payment in the next available fiscal year. In the meantime, payments on the student loan debt will not occur.

****§ VI. Enactment****

****1.**** This Act will go into effect immediately upon passage.

This Act was written by Assemblyman /u/imNotGoodAtNaming (D-MA)