



MASSACHUSETTS AGREES:
**Defend Public
Higher Ed Now**

Dear MTA Higher Education Members,

Our campaign to stop the cuts, furloughs and layoffs — and to prepare our campuses for a safe reopening — is kicking into high gear. Please register to [join a Zoom meeting](#) for all higher ed members at **5 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 10**, as we make plans for the next stage of our campaign, creating pressure to reverse cuts and to protect health and safety.

Members successfully lobbied the Legislature to pass a continued level-funded budget, which will stabilize higher ed funding through October. This means campus layoffs, furloughs and program cuts are UNNECESSARY — and we will hold our employers accountable. We are calling on the legislature to [enact progressive revenue](#), and on Congress to pass the [HEROES Act](#). The current federal stimulus bill includes significant funding for higher ed.

We are now on a countdown to college restart. Some colleges have chosen to go fully remote, some are bringing thousands of students to campus and some still don't have a plan. **On August 10, [we will plan actions](#)** that we can take in the coming month to win safe, fully staffed campuses and to defend public higher education.

In the past week we launched [MassachusettsAgrees.org](#) with a powerful advertisement on TV and social media. The message calls our employers to task for not doing a better job ensuring health and safety and for not advocating on our behalf. We've received a lot of coverage in the *Boston Herald*, *Boston Business Journal*, *Worcester Telegram*, and the *Lowell Sun* for our ["empty chairs/pink slips"](#) action.



Letters from members are also making the papers, including [this one](#) exposing Salem State's fake austerity. Be sure to check out the creative SSU guerilla theater action on their [facebook page](#).

And while you're on FB, look at the attention [STCC members](#) are getting from legislators and the media! Join MCCC members in demanding a reversal of the closure of 7 programs, and layoffs in 4 colleges.

We held a 700-member legislative hearing on Aug. 3, during which members from across the public higher ed system, a student and a preK12 educator shared their testimony about the crises of the pandemic, austerity, and racial injustice that we face in our public colleges and universities, and the effect of 20 years of disinvestment by the state.

Here's a [recording of the hearing](#). You can add your voice: email Testimony@massteacher.org or [video](#) your testimony. Immediately after the hearing, we sent President Meehan, Commissioner Santiago, the Board of Higher Education and the UMass Board of Trustees 2,275 [petition](#)s signed by higher ed employees from 20 unions.

MTA locals also signed on to an [open letter](#) calling for safe reopening and transformation of higher ed, and members authored a paper on the [economic benefits of investing](#) in public higher ed. Be sure to check [www.massteacher.org](#) for updated health and safety resources and MTA social media for the latest news and actions.

Please join us on **Monday, Aug. 10** to chart out the coming weeks of action and advocacy to secure a safe, fully staffed fall semester — and use the moment to launch a renewed commitment to public higher education.

In solidarity, Merrie and Max

