

# Just the Facts

## Funding the Public Higher Education Contracts

After a long process of good-faith bargaining, the Governor filed legislation to fund the negotiated contracts of the faculty and staff at the Commonwealth's public higher education institutions. The Legislature has yet to act upon the Governor's funding requests.

### Background:

- 🔍 On June 4, 2009, the Governor filed a bill (H 1141) that included the contracts for the MTA unions representing faculty, staff and other employees at the University of Massachusetts system, requesting funding of \$4,170,595 for the locals represented by the MTA.
- 🔍 Also in June, 2009, in a supplemental budget request, the Governor said that the contracts were "the result of a cautious collective bargaining approach our administration took...to effectively respond to the extraordinary fiscal challenges" the Commonwealth was now facing.
- 🔍 On December 14, 2009, the Governor filed a bill (H 4396) that included the contracts for three other MTA locals representing faculty and professional staff at state and community colleges: the Association of Professional Administrators (APA), Massachusetts Community College Council (MCCC) and the Massachusetts Association of State Colleges (MSCA), requesting funding of \$3,202,547, plus correction for APA funding totals \$3,599,538. In the cover letter to this bill, the Governor wrote: "Sufficient revenues are estimated to be available to finance these appropriations. I urge your prompt and favorable consideration of this bill."
- 🔍 The total amount needed to fund these contracts is **\$7,770,133**.
- 🔍 Both bills were sent to the Committee on House Ways and Means.

**MTA urges the Legislature to take action to fund these contracts to fulfill its obligation to our public employees.**

### Honoring the Collective Bargaining Process:

- 🔍 Massachusetts has long respected and supported collective bargaining as a valuable institution that contributes to the health and prosperity of our democratic society.
- 🔍 At the heart of collective bargaining is the core concept that when the parties enter into an agreement, both sides honor it. These contracts were entered into and bargained by both parties in good faith, with the expectation that the contracts would be funded.

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- 🔍 The contracts were settled, ratified and executed by the parties after more than a year of extensive negotiations.
- 🔍 All of this was completed during a time of recession, so that the contracts, as negotiated, reflected the state's fiscal insecurity. Significant concessions were made by union members due to the state's financial situation.
- 🔍 The contracts to be funded are bare-bones. After agreeing to a one-year wage freeze, there is only a 1 – 1.5 percent increase in the first year of a new contract. Recently, GIC health insurance deductibles and co-pays have increased, an effective pay cut for most members.

### **Investment in Public Higher Education Important in Difficult Economic Times:**

- 🔍 Education and training of the workforce, particularly that offered by our public higher education institutions, is one of the ways the Commonwealth will move out of the present economic downturn.
- 🔍 Investment in public higher education has a positive financial return to the state. Money invested in public higher education creates a highly educated workforce, which is essential for the state's economy to grow. Four out of five public higher education graduates remain in Massachusetts.
- 🔍 Investing in the higher education workforce is investing in higher education since it makes the system competitive with comparable institutions in other states. It helps colleges and UMass recruit and retain excellent faculty and staff. Studies done by the University of Massachusetts and the Board of Higher Education show that our salaries lag well behind those at our peer institutions.
- 🔍 Enrollment in each of our public higher education institutions has skyrocketed, while the number of faculty and staff positions has, in most cases, remained stagnant or been reduced. As a result, the workload of our members has increased.