

# North Central MASSACHUSETTS

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

October 2, 2023

The Honorable Denise Garlick  
House Chair, Joint Committee on Education  
24 Beacon St, Room 473G  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Jason Lewis  
Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Education  
24 Beacon St, Room 511-B  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Garlick and Chairman Lewis,

I am writing you both today in regards to S.246 and H.495, An Act Empowering Students and Schools to Thrive. The Chamber has concerns when it comes to this particular piece of legislation.

In 2019, the business community in our region and across the Commonwealth supported substantial increases in state funding for education that were accompanied by high expectations for all students and a transparent system for measuring progress and results, much like had been done in the early 1990s. As a result, Massachusetts now leads the nation in student achievement, a key competitive advantage for our Commonwealth. We are concerned that at a time when we are already facing skills gaps and workforce shortages, eliminating the statewide MCAS graduation requirement, in effect, will lower the standard and lead to too many students graduating unprepared for college and careers.

Eliminating the MCAS graduation requirement, the statewide standard for high school graduation, will leave the state with no standard definition of what it means to be ready for the future. It will effectively dismantle reforms made in the past and strip the state of any meaningful way for measure results and progress in schools, as well as the state's ability to intervene and support schools whose students are struggling academically. At a time when career readiness has never been more important, we need accountability to ensure that our students are prepared for a better future whether they are entering higher education or joining the workforce.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Roy M. Nascimento  
President & CEO