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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Massachusetts Senate unanimously approves Foundation Budget reforms, sending bill to House**

BOSTON – On Thursday, students, parents, and teachers filled the State House as the Massachusetts Senate unanimously voted to pass a key education reform bill to update the state’s 25-year-old funding formula.

The bill, *An Act Modernizing the Foundation Budget for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (S.2506), was introduced by **Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz (D-Boston)** and was co-sponsored by 36 senators. The bill would implement the recommendations of the bipartisan Foundation Budget Review Commission (FBRC) which found that the foundation budget formula is drastically underestimating education costs. This has forced deep cuts to classrooms and critical programs, and one of the worst achievement gaps in the nation.

**Senator Anne M. Gobi (D-Spencer)** had this to say, “This is a necessary step to recognize that funding has been inadequate and our students deserve more.”

“In Massachusetts we strive for a fair and equal education system, not as an ideal, but as a reality,” said **Senate President Harriette L. Chandler (D-Worcester)**. “This is an immensely important bill for our schools, large and small. I want to commend Senator Chang-Diaz for her commitment, dedication, and hard work on this legislation.”

“With the unanimous passage of the commission’s recommendations, the Senate is doing its part to make good on our obligation to every child in Massachusetts,” said **Sen. Chang-Díaz**, Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Education. “For years now, our schools have been suffering death by a thousand paper cuts, and it’s long past time we right this wrong. Schools and families shouldn’t have to lawyer up to get a quality education for their children.”

The vote follows months of advocacy by education stakeholders across Massachusetts. More than 50 school committees across the state have passed resolutions supporting the reforms, and Brockton Public Schools announced earlier this year that they are preparing to sue the Commonwealth for failing in its constitutional obligation to properly fulfill its obligations to funding.

“The Senate’s initiative will be welcomed by school committee members and education stakeholders,” said **Beverly Hugo**, MASC President, Framingham School Committee. “It sets us on the right path to get the full and adequate funding that we’ve been seeking, over a reasonable period of time.”

Established by the 1993 Education Reform Act, the Foundation Budget was designed to ensure every Massachusetts student was provided a quality education. However, the formula has failed to keep up with rising fixed costs like health care and special education that have outpaced initial estimates. It also underrated what it actually takes to educate English Language Learners and students living in poverty. The FBRC found these combined costs have led the Commonwealth to underestimate the cost of education by \$1-2 billion every year.

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