



**WORKFORCE**  
**DATA QUALITY**  
**CAMPAIGN**

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June 23, 2017

**Re:** Support for SB 674

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Higher Education:

Workforce Data Quality Campaign (WDQC), a project of the National Skills Coalition, is a nonprofit initiative that promotes policies to provide stakeholders -- such as students, employers, educators, and policymakers -- with actionable and privacy-protected information to assess our nation's education and workforce strategies. We write today to urge you to support SB 674, which would expand data collection from public postsecondary institutions to provide prospective students with the information they need to make informed decisions. The bill would also create a task force to plan a longitudinal data system that can link information from K-12 and into the workforce.

Postsecondary education is a significant expense for many families. By providing students with information about occupations and how past graduates have fared in their careers, this bill would help potential students in Massachusetts select institutions and programs likely to serve them well.

Furthermore, this bill will help the state answer important questions about its education and workforce programs. Longitudinal data systems include privacy-protected data about individuals over time. They are important because they can follow progress through different education, training, and social service programs to see which are helping people access employment and higher earnings. By creating a task force to plan a longitudinal data system, and by providing information to the governor and legislature, the state will move towards being able to answer questions such as:

- What types of credentials help workers increase their earnings?
- Are workforce development programs reducing reliance on public benefits?
- How do career and technical education programs in high school affect student success in college and employment?

Although the benefits of this bill are great, its burden is not exceptional. Massachusetts' public institutions already submit data to the state. Most of this bill's onus falls to the Department of

Revenue and the Division of Unemployment Assistance to supply wage data to match with student data. Furthermore, the state is already developing a longitudinal data system and was recently awarded a federal grant to improve its workforce data. This bill would simply facilitate progress on these early efforts.

In conclusion, enacting SB 674 will provide students and the state with better information about postsecondary education, an important step in helping Massachusetts develop its skilled workforce for a competitive economy. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenna Leventoff". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jenna Leventoff

Workforce Data Quality Campaign