

**VHEAD**  
**VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**ADVOCACY DAY**  
January 12, 2017

**“Hands Off Higher Ed”**  
Maintaining Commonwealth Support for Higher  
Education

***REPRESENTING VIRGINIA COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY FACULTY***

**Resist Calls to Cut Funding for Higher Education**

Virginia’s college and university faculty ask our representatives to resist calls to cut funding for higher education. Reaffirm your commitment to higher education to support economic growth in Virginia and promote better public health.

**State Funding for Higher Education Has Dropped 33%**

Virginia’s colleges and universities are some of the best in the country, but the continued erosion of state support has driven higher education budgets to the breaking point. According to JLARC, state operational support per in-state student **between 1998 and 2012 has dropped 33 percent.**<sup>1</sup> The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities notes that this drop has been most pronounced since the 2008 recession, with Virginia support for higher education **dropping by 22.5% from 2008 to 2016.**<sup>2</sup>

**Higher Education Is Key To Economic Growth**

States can build a strong foundation for economic success by investing in education, according to the Economic Policy Institute. In fact, EPI found that providing expanded access to high quality education will do more to **strengthen the overall state economy** than anything else a state government can do.<sup>3</sup> The Bureau of Labor Statistics found that people with more education typically earn more and have a lower likelihood of being unemployed.<sup>4</sup> Higher education also **significantly increases the ability to move up the economic ladder.** The Brookings Institute found that having a college degree means that an individual is 75% more likely to advance to a higher income quintile.<sup>5</sup> Virginia’s economy cannot afford cuts to higher education funding.

**Higher Education Reduces Societal Health Costs**

Spending on healthcare in the U.S. is higher than in any other country with worse health outcomes,<sup>6</sup> and those costs put American employers at a competitive disadvantage as healthcare now accounts for 12% of employer benefits.<sup>7</sup> Support for higher education reduces this economic burden in a number of ways. Due, in part, to lower levels of unemployment and higher incomes for college graduates, diabetes prevalence in college graduates is half that of adults without a high school degree (7% vs. 15%), college graduates are more like to engage in health promoting behaviors, and a college education increases a person’s chances of being insured.<sup>8</sup> These result in savings for Virginia. A study in Pennsylvania found that while the average annual public health costs are \$2,700 per high school dropout and \$1,000 per high school graduate, they are as low as \$170 per college graduate.<sup>9</sup>

**Higher Education Needs and Deserves a High Level of State Commitment**

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<sup>1</sup> JLARC, "Addressing the Cost of Public Higher Education in Virginia," House Document 3 (2015), Commonwealth of Virginia, November 2014. <http://jlarc.virginia.gov/pdfs/reports/Rpt461.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Mitchell, Michael, Michael Leachman, and Kathleen Masterson. "Funding Down, Tuition Up." *Funding Down, Tuition Up* | Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 15 Aug. 2016. Web. 06 Dec. 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Berger, Noah, and Peter Fisher. "A Well-Educated Workforce Is Key to State Prosperity." Economic Policy Institute, 22 Aug. 2013. Web. 06 Dec. 2016.

<sup>4</sup> "Earnings and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment." *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 15 Mar. 2016. Web. 06 Dec. 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Cited in Eberly, Jan, and Carmel Martin. "Treasury Notes." *The Economic Case for Higher Education*. U.S. Department of the Treasury, 13 Dec. 2012. Web. 06 Dec. 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Squires, David, and Chloe Anderson. "U.S. Health Care from a Global Perspective." The Commonwealth Fund, 8 Oct. 2015. Web. 06 Dec. 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Johnson, Toni. "Healthcare Costs and U.S. Competitiveness." *Council on Foreign Relations*. Council on Foreign Relations, 26 Mar. 2012. Web. 06 Dec. 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Zimmerman, Emily B. "Population Health: Behavioral and Social Science Insights." U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 14 Sept. 2015. Web. 06 Dec. 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Mitra, Dana, PhD. "Pennsylvania's Best Investment: The Social and Economic Benefits of Public Education." 27 June 2011. Web. 06 Dec. 2016.