

## Free Higher Education to Vermonters

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Currently, Vermont ranks 50 out of 50 states for state support for higher education, this means that Vermont spends less per student than any other state in the U.S. Because of this, Vermonters who get college degrees pay one of the highest tuitions in the country and our students graduate on average with more student debt than students from other states.

There was a time when Vermont had more support for higher education, but state support has been consistently reduced since 1980. In 1980, state appropriations covered 51% of the costs of the VSC but as of 2019 they pay for less than 20% of the costs. The cost of tuition to Vermonters is a huge burden and often too many people turn away their chance of going to college because it is so expensive. I personally am going to graduate with \$30,000 in student loan debt in May.

An investment in public higher education is an investment on Vermont because a good majority of our students stay and work in Vermont after graduation.

So, what can we do? We can support the Governor's proposal for a 3 million dollar increase; support the Chancellor's proposal for a 5 million dollar increase each year for the next 5 years, and support free tuition for all Vermonters at public colleges and universities.