

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Commission on Equitable Public University Funding Act.

6 Section 5. Findings. The General Assembly finds all of the
7 following:

8 (1) Historical and continued systemic racism has
9 created significant disparities in college access,
10 affordability, and completion for Black, Latinx, and other
11 underrepresented and historically underserved students in
12 this State.

13 (2) Improvements in postsecondary access, completion,
14 and success rates are required in order to meet State
15 goals for equity in attainment and will require further
16 investments in the higher education system to support
17 historically underrepresented and underserved groups,
18 including Black, Latinx, and low-income students in
19 particular.

20 (3) This State's approach to funding education has
21 contributed to racial and socioeconomic inequities in
22 access to resources and educational outcomes.

23 (4) Great strides have been made in this State in

1 addressing inequity in funding the kindergarten through
2 grade 12 public school system, including the adoption of
3 an evidence-based funding formula, which has resulted in
4 new funds being targeted to the highest-need districts.

5 (5) Adequate, equitable, and stable investment in
6 higher education is the key to ensuring that every
7 institution of higher education can provide adequate
8 academic, financial, and social-emotional support and
9 services that improve persistence and completion.

10 (6) In this State, higher education appropriations
11 have effectively been cut in half since fiscal year 2002.
12 Institutions of higher education serving higher
13 percentages of Black students are more reliant on State
14 funds and have been disproportionately harmed by this
15 disinvestment in higher education.

16 (7) As a result of historic underfunding and level
17 cuts to institutions of higher education, this State's
18 public universities have needed to increase tuition to
19 make up the funding shortfalls.

20 (8) Combined with the high cost of college and
21 insufficient State financial aid, racial income and wealth
22 disparities caused by structural racism contribute to the
23 accumulation of student debt and make college enrollment
24 and persistence more challenging for Black and Latinx
25 students.

26 (9) Despite similar numbers of Black high school

1 graduates, about 25,000 fewer Black students enrolled in
2 institutions of higher education in this State in 2018
3 compared to 2008.

4 (10) State appropriations make it possible for
5 colleges to provide essential academic services,
6 social-emotional support and services, and institutional
7 aid to students to improve student persistence and
8 completion.

9 (11) This State must strategically invest in higher
10 education to address wide disparities in degree
11 completion. Public community colleges currently graduate
12 Black and Latinx students at a rate of 14% and 26% within 3
13 years, respectively, compared to 38% of white students. At
14 public universities, Black and Latinx students currently
15 graduate at a rate of 34% and 49%, respectively, compared
16 to 66% of white students, within 6 years.

17 (12) This State has a moral obligation and economic
18 interest in dismantling and reforming structures that
19 create or exacerbate racial and socioeconomic inequities
20 in higher education.

21 (13) This State benefits from a public higher
22 education system that receives adequate and stable
23 resources for student success and that strategically uses
24 those resources to maximize the potential of each public
25 institution of higher education and to maximize the
26 benefits to this State, including, but not limited to,

1 improved college access and attainment and higher median
2 wages for all residents, reduced income inequalities,
3 improved economic output and innovation, increased access
4 and engagement in world-class research opportunities, and
5 improved college enrollment, persistence, and completion
6 of underrepresented and historically underserved students,
7 including Black and Latinx students and students from
8 low-income families.

9 Section 10. Commission on Equitable Public University
10 Funding; purpose.

11 (a) There is created the Commission on Equitable Public
12 University Funding.

13 (b) The purpose of the Commission is to, at a minimum,
14 recommend specific data-driven criteria and approaches to the
15 General Assembly to adequately, equitably, and stably fund
16 public universities in this State and to evaluate the existing
17 funding methods used for public universities.

18 Section 15. Membership; administrative support;
19 compensation.

20 (a) The membership of the Commission shall include, at a
21 minimum:

22 (1) One member of the Senate appointed by the
23 President of the Senate, who shall serve as
24 co-chairperson.

1 (2) One member of the House of Representatives
2 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives,
3 who shall serve as co-chairperson.

4 (3) The chairperson of the Board of Higher Education
5 or a designee, who shall serve as co-chairperson.

6 (4) One member appointed by the Governor, who shall
7 serve as co-chairperson.

8 (5) One member of the Senate appointed by the Minority
9 Leader of the Senate.

10 (6) One member of the House of Representatives
11 appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of
12 Representatives.

13 (7) The chairperson of the Illinois Student Assistance
14 Commission or a designee.

15 (8) The chairperson of the Higher Education Committee
16 of the House of Representatives or a designee.

17 (9) The Minority Spokesperson of the Higher Education
18 Committee of the House of Representatives or a designee.

19 (10) The chairperson of the Higher Education Committee
20 of the Senate or a designee.

21 (11) The Minority Spokesperson of the Higher Education
22 Committee of the Senate or a designee.

23 (12) Twelve members representing the public
24 universities in this State each appointed by the President
25 of each public university.

26 (13) One member representing a higher education

1 advocacy organization focused on eliminating disparities
2 in college completion in this State for low-income and
3 first-generation college students and students of color
4 appointed by the Board of Higher Education.

5 (14) One member representing a statewide advocacy
6 organization focused on improving educational and
7 employment opportunities for women and adults appointed by
8 the Board of Higher Education.

9 (15) One member representing a statewide advocacy
10 organization focused on developing an equitable
11 birth-to-career educational system appointed by the Board
12 of Higher Education.

13 (16) One member representing a statewide organization
14 that advocates for alternative education and bridge
15 programs and the re-enrollment of students in this State
16 appointed by the Board of Higher Education.

17 (17) One member representing a fiscal policy research
18 organization focused on the impact that State-level budget
19 and tax policies have on equitable education funding
20 solutions appointed by the Board of Higher Education.

21 (18) Two members representing an organization that
22 advocates on behalf of public university faculty members
23 who are each employed by a different university appointed
24 by the Board of Higher Education.

25 (19) One health care expert from the public higher
26 education arena appointed by the Board of Higher

1 Education, in consultation with the presidents and
2 chancellors of the public universities.

3 (20) One member who has legal expertise in higher
4 education funding and finance appointed by the Board of
5 Higher Education.

6 (21) One postsecondary student enrolled at a public
7 university in this State appointed by the Board of Higher
8 Education.

9 (b) The Board of Higher Education shall recognize and
10 consider the representation of underrepresented and
11 historically underserved groups, including those who are
12 Black, Latinx, or from low-income families, and the racial and
13 geographical diversity of this State when making appointments
14 to the Commission.

15 (c) The co-chairpersons may identify and invite experts to
16 speak to the Commission on issues, including, but not limited
17 to, higher education funding, finance, health care, and
18 research and development.

19 (d) The Board of Higher Education shall provide
20 administrative support to the Commission, including any
21 related workgroups, and shall be responsible for administering
22 the Commission's operations and ensuring that the requirements
23 of this Act are met.

24 (e) The members of the Commission shall serve without
25 compensation for their services as members of the Commission.

1 Section 20. Meetings; reports.

2 (a) The Commission shall meet at least once per quarter
3 beginning no later than October 15, 2021.

4 (b) On or before July 1, 2023, the Commission shall
5 deliver to the General Assembly and publish on the Board of
6 Higher Education's Internet website or otherwise make publicly
7 available a report on the Commission's recommendations,
8 including specific criteria and funding approaches in
9 accordance with all applicable laws, to establish an
10 equity-based funding model for the allocation of State funds
11 to public universities. The recommendations included in the
12 report must be equity-centered and consider all of the
13 following areas:

14 (1) Remediating inequities in funding that have led to
15 disparities in access, affordability, and completion for
16 underrepresented and historically underserved student
17 groups, including students who are Black, Latinx, or from
18 low-income families.

19 (2) Ensuring that this State adequately, equitably,
20 and stably funds public institutions of higher education
21 in a manner that recognizes historical and current
22 inequities impacting underrepresented minorities' higher
23 education access and completion.

24 (3) Providing incentives to all 4-year institutions of
25 higher education in this State to enroll underrepresented
26 and historically underserved student groups, including

1 students who are Black, Latinx, or from low-income
2 families, in proportion to the diversity of this State's
3 population.

4 (4) Allowing ongoing monitoring and continuous
5 improvement of the public university funding models by
6 requiring transparency and accountability in how State
7 appropriations are expended and identifying a mechanism to
8 study and review the implementation of any funding model
9 developed and the long-term implications of this Act.

10 (5) Creating guidelines for how funding is distributed
11 during times of significant economic hardship, as defined
12 by the Commission, so that public institutions of higher
13 education are able to adequately, equitably, and stably
14 serve students.

15 (6) Ensuring that this State adequately and stably
16 funds public institutions of higher education that serve
17 underrepresented and historically underserved student
18 groups, including students who are Black, Latinx, or from
19 low-income families, and graduate and professional
20 students, including doctors, dentists, pharmacists, and
21 veterinarians.

22 (7) Supporting the diverse individual mission of each
23 public university, including its commitment to research
24 and health care enterprises that serve and enhance the
25 well-being of the residents of this State.

26 (8) Fostering the economic activity and innovation

1 generated by a university's activities, while recognizing
2 the impact historic funding inequities may have had on the
3 university's activities.

4 (9) Taking into consideration the percentage of
5 institutional aid provided from an institution's annual
6 budget.

7 (10) Taking into consideration the number of
8 undergraduate students engaged in research at each
9 university.

10 (11) Supporting institutional efforts to recruit and
11 retain world-class faculty and university leaders.

12 (12) Ensuring stable and adequate funding for all
13 institutions and that all universities are held harmless
14 to their current funding level. The Commission may
15 consider and report approaches to and the impact of a hold
16 harmless funding provision for institutions of higher
17 education as part of its final recommendations.

18 (13) Taking into consideration the long-term
19 implications and outcomes of the funding systems.

20 The recommendations must fulfill the principles
21 established by the Board of Higher Education's Strategic Plan.
22 The recommendations may also be informed by the data-driven
23 findings and recommendations established by the Chicago State
24 University Equity Working Group and other groups researching
25 equity in higher education and higher education funding and be
26 aligned to this State's postsecondary attainment goal and

1 related equity targets.

2 Section 25. Compliance. Notwithstanding any other law or
3 provision to the contrary, all public institutions of higher
4 education and State agencies regulating public institutions of
5 higher education shall furnish such data and information to
6 the Commission as the Commission deems necessary to fulfill
7 the requirements of this Act.

8 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
9 becoming law.