

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Education to hold hearings to evaluate the efficacy of programs, services, initiatives and other supports that will be needed to support students in completing their community college degrees, and investigate the opportunities to establish and enhance partnerships between the City of Philadelphia and the Community College of Philadelphia to establish career track degree programs that result in employment with the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia is committed to increasing the diversity of workplaces throughout Philadelphia, improving access to family sustaining jobs, expanding educational opportunities for all Philadelphians and reducing the poverty rate City-wide. Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) can help the City of Philadelphia make progress to these goals; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Kenney has stated that his vision for Community College of Philadelphia is that it is tuition free and that students facing issues like poverty, food insecurity, and child-care are not burdened into debt to obtain their education; and

WHEREAS, Community College of Philadelphia was founded in 1963 with an equal funding mandate, which requires equal funding from the state, City and students; and

WHEREAS, CCP's operating budget for this year was \$133 million, with students picking up nearly 54-percent of the cost. The state contributed 24-percent and the City contributed 22-percent; and

WHEREAS, There are over 400 "tuition free" college programs nationwide; and

WHEREAS, In the 2018-2019 academic year the Community College of Philadelphia enrolled an estimated 26,081 students for credit and non-credit courses, with 16,672 enrolled full time; and

WHEREAS, Tuition at Community College of Philadelphia was an average of \$5,100 per year in 2018-2019 and nearly 75-percent of all Community College of Philadelphia students receive financial aid; and

WHEREAS, Tuition isn't the only expense associated with obtaining a degree at Community College of Philadelphia. The cost of books, housing and other expenses add an average of additional \$12,200 per year; and

WHEREAS, Community College of Philadelphia has a tuition-free program, called The 50th Anniversary PROMISE Scholarshi <<https://www.ccp.edu/paying-college/tuition-assistance-programs/50th-anniversary-scholars-program>>, for low-income students eligible for federal financial aid; and

WHEREAS, Of these students 21% are enrolled in career programs which is a low number compared to enrollment in other programs at the institute; and

WHEREAS, Community College of Philadelphia has a diverse student body, with 43-percent African American, 9-percent Asian American, 15-Hispanic; and

WHEREAS, Twelve percent of the graduates from the School District of Philadelphia attend the Community College of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Tuition-free programs in other municipalities increase student enrollment in degree programs by an average of 10 to 15-percent; and

WHEREAS, Programs from other jurisdictions, like CUNY ASAP, provide a range of financial, academic, and personal support including comprehensive and personalized advice, career counseling, tutoring, waivers for tuition and mandatory fees, MTA MetroCards, and additional financial assistance to defray the cost of textbooks; and

WHEREAS, “Last dollar” programs can play an important role in making higher education affordable by paying the remaining balance of tuition and fees after other federal and state aid has been applied, and, in the long-term, may increase graduation rates, reduce poverty and improve Philadelphia’s workforce; and

WHEREAS, For low-income students, the barriers to attending and completing community college include a range of costs including housing, food, transportation and childcare; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, The Committee on Education is authorized to hold hearings to evaluate the efficacy of tuition-free programs, explore the additional supports that will be needed to support students in completing their community college degrees, and investigate the opportunities to establish and enhance partnerships between the City of Philadelphia and the Community College of Philadelphia to establish career track degree programs that result in employment with the City of Philadelphia.