

## 05.20.13 Future Ready Summit Remarks

AS PREPARED:

Governor Deval L. Patrick

Future Ready Summit

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Thank you, Secretary Malone, for that generous introduction and for your inspired and inspiring leadership.

Commissioner Chester, Commissioner Freeland, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you all for the powerful partnership we have had supporting public education -- from early education right up through higher education. Because of that partnership we have made tremendous strides forward.

We top the nation in student achievement and the world in math and science. MCAS scores are up again. After years of disinvestment, we are rebuilding our public university and college campuses. Enrollment is up and there are truly remarkable and innovative programs happening on every campus. We are strengthening the workforce development mission of our community colleges, to help more people get back to work.

Because of the work we are doing together, more and more people are getting their chance at the American Dream.

But if we in this Commonwealth really want to be "Future Ready," we have to deal with some unfinished business.

As you all know, in January, I proposed a budget that was about growing jobs and opportunity. It was about leaving our Commonwealth stronger and improving another generation's lives. It was a data-driven plan based on studies, based on experience, based on what you and many, many others have told us actually works. Imagine that!

My plan fully funds early education in this state. Why? Because we know from academic research, from years of public policy and from our own experience as parents that investing in our children at a young age pays huge dividends for them and for our communities as a whole.

My plan makes college more affordable. Why? Because the world is in the midst of a knowledge explosion and the winners in today's global competition will be those best equipped with the skills our universities and colleges teach.

We've been working to strengthen public education in Massachusetts for a very, very long time. These ideas are not new. But for one reason or another we have limited the practical access of some of our children to these life-changing opportunities. Now is the time to fulfill the promise of a great education for every child in the Commonwealth, so that every child is college and career ready -- so that jobs and opportunity grow.

None of these ends is controversial.

Business leaders, teachers and academic leaders, parents and many of you have called for just such investments for many decades.

Eighty-five members of the House signed a letter supporting more funding for early education. Business leaders from across industries have written to make the economic and the moral case for new funding for early education. There's not a parent, a student, or a college president I meet who doesn't lament the high cost of a college degree and worry that this prerequisite for many of today's jobs is becoming out of reach.

But time and again we get stuck on the means.

I have to acknowledge that even some of you come to conferences like this, join the chorus in favor of new resources to meet these needs, and then work at cross purposes in the legislature. Yes, it happens. I think we're going to have to start facing the fact that growing our economic future is a choice. We can leave that future to chance or we can decide, affirmatively and intentionally, to build it. Either way, it's a choice. I choose growth. And so should you.

I value my working relationship with the Speaker and the Senate President and many, many members. I am proud of the problem-solving that we and the Legislature and you and many others have done together through the worst economy in living memory.

That's why we lead the Nation in student achievement, in health care coverage, in veterans' services, in energy efficiency, in economic competitiveness and in entrepreneurialism.

That's why Massachusetts has climbed out of recession faster than most other states and is growing twice as fast as the national growth rate.

Earlier this year the Labor Department reported that Massachusetts has more jobs today than it did at its pre-recession peak in 2008. We are one of only seven states in America to have achieved this milestone. That didn't happen by accident. That happened because we worked together, because we made big choices together.

Some of those choices will require new taxes. That most certainly does NOT mean that I nor anyone else in government is off the hook when it comes to making government more efficient, more accountable and more innovative. We have eliminated over 6,000 positions in state government, consolidated agencies, shut down the Turnpike Authority, reformed the pension system, asked employees to pay a greater share of their health care benefits, and much more. Of course there is more to be done.

But at the same time citizens who want and need public education to grow jobs and opportunity are also not off the hook when it's time to talk about how to pay

for it.

I have done what I believe is demanded of leadership, which is to look out beyond the horizon and make decisions which are about the next generation and not just the next election cycle. I am here to ask you to join us in that work. Because the work of building the platform for growth is vital to our students and to all of us. Some of that will involve taxes. Some will involve reforms. They are not mutually exclusive, but rather two sides of the same coin.

The choices before us are difficult ones, ones that don't lend themselves to simple solutions or sound bites but that cry out for lasting solutions. Saying one thing to me and something else to legislative leaders down the hall may seem like clever politics but does little to make lasting solutions. The choices before us are about real people's lives and opportunities, yours and your neighbors'. If we want to do more not just to envision a better future, but actually enable it, we need to face the choices before us now, fearlessly, candidly and together. No more kicking cans down the road.

I am not running for anything else. I have no agenda other than to make our Commonwealth stronger, to leave it better than I found it. We have a rare chance, right now, to do some lasting good in education as well as in transportation, in growth and opportunity, for our time and the generation to come. If that is what you're interested in, I look forward to working with you.

Thank you.