

I started my career as a chemistry professor. As a former educator, I understand the vital importance of education for our economy and our democracy.

In today's knowledge economy, education is the engine of growth and opportunity. Historically, education has been one of America's global advantages. From days of the Pilgrims, we've led the world in literacy. Later, America pioneered an inclusive public education system. For America to retain its global competitive edge, we must continue to lead the world in education, research, and innovation.

I am deeply committed to funding and improving American education at all levels, from pre-kindergarten to PhD programs.

Paying America's Teachers

Public school teachers are trusted public servants. They are educators, role models, and care providers. They are vital to the future of our country, and we ought to pay them accordingly. Unfortunately, teacher pay has not kept up with compensation in other professions that require a college degree. Teachers earn 15 percent less per work week than people in comparable professions. For America to keep recruiting and retaining outstanding teachers, we need to make sure a career in education is financially viable as well as emotionally rewarding.

Early Childhood Education

A high-quality education needs to begin early. I support investments in early childhood education—through programs like Head Start and the Child Development Block Grant—to make sure every child gets off to a good start in life. Early childhood education is a wise investment that promotes social justice and strengthens our economy.

Programs like Head Start are not only proven to be effective academically, but are also [extremely cost effective](#)

. According to a 2005 study, every dollar spent on Head Start saves America \$2 to \$4 in the long run by reducing later expenditures on education, health care, and criminal justice. A study by the Federal Reserve estimated that investment in early childhood education generates an annual return of 12 percent.

Making College Affordable

The United States—and especially Massachusetts—has some of the finest universities in the world. Unfortunately, the cost of college is rising every year, putting a college degree out of reach for some low-income and middle-income Americans. I believe college education should be available to every American student who has the talent and work ethic to excel. A student's achievement should be limited only by his or her own imagination, never by his or her family's pocketbook.

To make college affordable for all, I support increasing federal student aid programs such as the [Pell Grant](#). The Pell Grant helps undergraduate students who have demonstrated financial need. I also support federal [TRIO Programs](#), which are designed to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds get to college and succeed. TRIO programs reach students with disabilities, low-income individuals, and first-generation college students.

I am proud that, in 2010, the Democratic majority in Congress passed the single largest investment in aid to help students and families pay for college in history. The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA) reformed the way federal student loans are managed to save money. By cutting out subsidies to big banks and lending directly to students, we saved taxpayers over \$60 billion and invested most of those savings back into education. SAFRA increased the maximum annual Pell Grant, invested in community colleges, and reduced the deficit.

I also support tax credits for college tuition, which help middle-income families afford college. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 increased the “American Opportunity” tax credit from \$1,800 to \$2,500. It has since been extended through 2012.

Investing in Research

Cutting-edge research is America's global economic advantage: nobody out-competes the United States when it comes to scientific research and innovation. Massachusetts leads the United States in scientific research. From UMass in Western Massachusetts to Harvard and MIT in the east, we have some of the world's best research universities and hundreds of innovative technology companies. I'm proud to represent many of our nation's top-notch colleges and universities.

American colleges and universities are crucial components of our national research strategy. Professors and students across the country are doing cutting-edge research in medicine, alternative energy, computer technology, and numerous other areas. Continuing to support research must be a priority. I support aggressive funding for the [National Institutes of Health](#), the [National Science Foundation](#), the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#), and other grant-making research agencies.

More Information

[TRIO Programs](#) – to help disadvantaged students achieve a college degree

The [Pell Grant](#) – student aid for low-income students

The [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) – your starting point for college financial aid