

8/8/21 [AllUnit] Fund Our Contracts

Hi everyone,

We're angry – despite repeated promises that the state legislature would approve the MSP contract before the end of formal session last week, it did not happen. We need your voices to persuade the state legislature to act now to pass our raises.

The MSP contract has been stalled at the final step: legislative approval. Under state law, our negotiated contracts must be funded by the state legislature. Our raises, along with several other contracts, were added to a huge Economic Development bill that was a “sure thing” to pass the legislature this spring. At the last minute Governor Baker brought up a 1980s law that halted the entire bill. Now the legislature is in informal session for the rest of August. We need them to pull our contract out of the larger bill and pass our long-awaited raises now, during informal session. We can't wait until the fall – it's just not fair.

State reps have asked for more information from their constituents about how the delay in passing the raises is impacting individuals, programs, and the university as a whole. You can help by telling your concrete story. Possible messages include:

- We absolutely cannot wait until September – ratified union contracts are different from other discretionary spending in the large Economic Development bill – this is a debt that needs to be paid now.
- We haven't had a raise since July 2019, despite unprecedented inflation and overflowing state coffers. Withholding these funds harms UMass and public higher education.
- The MSP contract was ratified and submitted in April and 1,720 UMass Amherst employees have been counting on those raises for the past five months.
- The delay impacts our families and our wider communities in Western Mass, where UMass is the largest employer.
- Here's what I was planning to do this summer with my retro pay that I was promised in April...[be specific]
- Here's why my program is struggling to hire people to come work at UMass...[be specific]
- The legislature's inaction is undermining public education as a whole.

Write to your state rep (or all of them since they all represent many UMass employees) – they have heard repeatedly from MSP and MTA leadership, and they said they need to hear from you:

Senator Jo Comerford: Jo.Comerford@masenate.gov; (617) 722-1532

Rep. Mindy Domb: mindy.domb@mahouse.gov; (413) 335-1362

Rep. Natalie Blais: Natalie.blais@mahouse.gov; (413) 362-9453

Rep. Lindsay Sabadosa: Lindsay.sabadosa@mahouse.gov; (617) 722-2304 or (413) 270-1166

It can't hurt to include the House leadership:

Rep. Ron Mariano: Ronald.Mariano@mahouse.gov; (617) 722-2500

Rep. Aaron Michlewitz: Aaron.M.Michlewitz@mahouse.gov; (617) 722-2990

Or find your own rep here: <https://malegislature.gov/statehouse/contact>

Ask your friends and family to sign the petition:

<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/urge-your-legislators-to-validate-higher-ed-collective-bargaining-agreements>

For more details about the Economic Development bill and Governor Baker's intervention:

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/08/01/business/we-have-urgent-needs-business-leaders-frustrated-lawmakers-fail-pass-jobs-bill/>

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/massachusetts-playbook/2022/08/01/procrastinating-legislating-00048882>

In solidarity,

Eve and Marc