

## Restoring State Investment in Montana Colleges & Universities

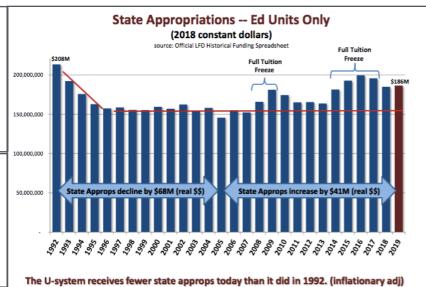
Montana students ask lawmakers to support investments in higher education *on par with those of the past* with \$24 million for a funded tuition freeze and \$5 million to restore state-sponsored financial aid.

This would place the MUS state appropriation even, in real dollars, with state support in 1992.

While decreased state support is only *part* of problems like **college affordability** and the **student debt crisis**, decreased state support for higher ed compounds the problem for Montana students & families.

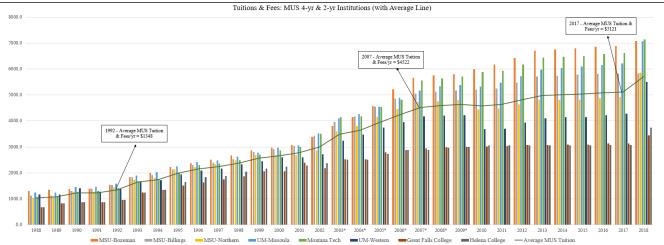
State support to the Montana University System (MUS) Unrestricted funds is roughly \$22 million less in real dollars than in 1992.

While MUS State appropriations to the MUS have increased by a net \$66 million since 1992, cuts from 1992 to 2006, and sporadic cuts since, have left state support outpaced by inflation for 27 years.



In Addition, \$5.3 million/yr of state need- and merit-based aid has been cut over the past 4 years Today, 60% of MT students borrow to attend college,

and Montana borrowers graduate with an average of \$28,000 in student debt.



Montana's economy can't afford to fund higher ed at lower levels than years past, and we can't afford to shift more costs for a college education to our students & families.

Please support proposals to **invest \$24 million in the MUS** funded tuition freeze and restore **\$5 million of state-sponsored financial aid** for Montana students & families who need it most.