

# News

## Teens Rally for Jobs at State House

As seen in The Boston Globe

By Paige Sutherland

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<http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2014/02/21/teenagers-trek-state-house-rally-for-jobs/1a0eeYjszLwRyinq2Az1L/story.html>



*A Boston police officer acted as crossing guard at St. James Avenue and Arlington Street for a group of teens headed to the State House for a jobs rally.*

Rather than sleep in during school vacation, students from across Massachusetts woke up early Thursday and took to the streets of Boston to rally for summer jobs funding.

More than 1,000 teenagers filled the seats at Old South Church, where many of them spoke, sang, or rapped about the importance of hiring youths.

Maryanne Smith, 17, of Dorchester, said that working has helped her build such skills as confidence, leadership, and time management.

“These skills are going to give me a pathway to get ready for the big world once I get out of high school,” said Smith, a senior at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School in Roxbury.

Students waving signs marched to the State House to press lawmakers to approve up to \$24.5 million in summer jobs programs for 2015. State officials including Attorney General Martha Coakley, who is running for governor, were in attendance.

Felix Arroyo, chief of health and human services for Boston, said on behalf of Mayor Martin J. Walsh that they expect businesses in the city to offer jobs to young people.

According to advocates, the state's summer employment rate has fallen from about 54 percent of teenagers in 1999 to about 27 percent in 2012.

Jaelle Sanon, 17, said she has struggled to find work.

"Most companies say that we don't have experience," said Sanon, a senior at John D. O'Bryant School of Math and Science in Roxbury. "But how do we get experience if no one will hire us?" she asked.

Some teens said that having extra income helped their families stay afloat. Keturah Brewster, 18, a senior at Boston Latin Academy, lost her mother six years ago and has used her paycheck for rent and food.

"If I didn't have a job," Brewster said, "I would be homeless."