



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

## Senator Lea Webb, Assemblymember Lupardo, UUP, and Student Advocates Rally for Funding for the State University of New York in the NYS Budget

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**BINGHAMTON, NY** - Senator Lea Webb, Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo, the United University Professions (UUP), members of the Graduate Student Employee Union (GSEU), and the SUNY Educational Opportunities Program (EOP) rallied today at Binghamton University to advocate for funding for the State University of New York (SUNY) in the State's 2023-2024 fiscal year budget.

Last week, both houses of the State Legislature produced their one-house budget proposals in response to the executive budget proposal that was released last month. In their budget proposals, the Senate and the Assembly called for historic funding for higher education and rejected the executive's call for a tuition rate hike, vowing to ensure that our public institutions remain within reach for all New Yorkers.

The Senate and Assembly proposals focus on eliminating current and future mandatory university fees for both SUNY and CUNY graduate students, and include a significant increase in operational aid, which would provide more funding for capital improvements, staff, and academic programming at our SUNYs and community colleges. The budget proposals also increase the maximum family income eligibility for Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) eligibility from \$80,000 to \$110,000, which provides financial resources for students and their families to help pay for college.

Additionally, this budget includes legislation by Senator Webb to establish the SUNY Black Leadership Institute designed to ensure that campus leadership has greater representation of the diverse student populations across SUNY campuses.

"I am a proud alum of two SUNY schools, and I know how important our public institutions are to working families across the state," **said Senator Lea Webb.** "We must make sure that a quality public education is accessible for all New Yorkers, which is why our budget proposal adds more resources to SUNY. I am proud to support the Senate's call for an additional \$151 million in operating aid for our four-year SUNY colleges and universities funding for SUNY and community colleges, an increased to the maximum family income eligibility for Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), and our proposal to eliminate current and future mandatory university fees on both SUNY and CUNY graduate students. I will continue to fight to ensure that the priorities we have put forth in our one-house budget are secured in the State's final budget."

**Assemblywoman Lupardo said,** “I have a long-standing relationship with SUNY as a graduate and Assembly representative for many years. I was also a proud member of UUP, for ten years, while a Lecturer at BU. I am pleased that both the Assembly and Senate direct significant resources to SUNY in our one house budget proposals. We are committed to increased operating aid, restoration of EOP funding, and expanded tuition assistance, among other important initiatives. During these final budget negotiations, we are committed to addressing the chronic underfunding of SUNY by providing substantial support.”

“UUP thanks Senator Webb and Assemblymember Lupardo for supporting UUP members and for being strong advocates for SUNY. They understand the financial pressure SUNY campuses and public teaching hospitals are under—including 19 campuses across the state facing multimillion-dollar projected and structural deficits,” **said United University Professions President Frederick E. Kowal.** “While there is more support for SUNY in this year’s Executive Budget, it is not enough to overcome years of budget cuts and austerity under the previous administration. We urge the governor and state legislators to work together to provide the funding to stabilize our 19 campuses and teaching hospitals in this year’s budget.”

“SUNY works because we, the staff and educators, do. A fully funded SUNY will allow for our institutions to focus on improving our working conditions which will in turn create a stronger environment for education to occur.” **said Emily Blakley, President of the Graduate Students Worker Union at Binghamton University.**

“The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) has operated at Binghamton University for 55 years. A lot has changed during that time but the charge and mission of EOP has remained the same and that is to wrap our students with the comprehensive services that guide their pathways to success. While we are so grateful to Governor Hochul for the support that EOP has received this past year; however it is due to the many prior years of cuts and level funding that we are years behind when it comes to closing the gap for our students. This is

why we need to see an increase for EOP and other SUNY opportunity programs. We know the beneficial impact that these dollars have on our students, their families and entire communities across New York state.

Restore and Increase! Sounds like a worthy investment.” **said Karima Legette, EOP Director, Binghamton University and EOP alumna, UUP member.**

“Students already pay too much tuition for what should be public schools. The cost and fees have been rising every year and students, especially those who are working while attending school, need this relief,” **said Shawna Stevenson, a student at Binghamton University.**

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