



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

## Sen. Gounardes: Universal FAFSA Access Ensures Every Student Can Pursue Higher Education

ANDREW GOUNARDES April 20, 2024

| ISSUE: COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY, HIGHER EDUCATION



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: APRIL 20, 2024**

*New York State Senator Andrew Gounardes released the following statement today after the Senate voted to approve a final state budget that includes a version of his **proposal** to ensure universal access to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for all high school seniors:*

“I’m so proud that this year’s New York State budget includes my proposal to guarantee universal FAFSA access for all high school seniors across New York. This simple but

profound policy ensures every high school senior who wants to can access higher education.

“The adopted budget requires all school districts to ensure that students apply for FAFSA or the NYS DREAM Act, or complete a waiver if they choose not to apply. School districts must notify high school seniors twice of their financial aid options, and provide annual reports to the New York State Education Department with metrics on financial aid application completion rates.

“A college education can unlock so many pathways for young people, particularly for low-income students, students from immigrant families, and first-generation students. But far too often, the cost of college is a barrier. And even worse: for many students, that cost is a barrier only because they don’t know about aid that can make it affordable.

“Studies show 90% of high school seniors who complete the FAFSA go to college directly after graduation, **compared to just 55%** who don’t. For the lowest-income high school students, completing the FAFSA makes it more than twice as likely they’ll be in college the following fall. Last year, students in New York left **over \$225 million** in unclaimed federal financial aid on the table simply because they didn’t apply.

“In short, when more students fill out the FAFSA, more students attend college—because they’ve learned they can actually afford it. By ensuring every student has the opportunity to complete the FAFSA, we show them a door to a prosperous future and put them in position to fling it open.”

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### 2023-S1983A

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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[Relates to a uniform presentation to students regarding applying for financial aid](#)

January 18, 2023

In Senate Committee **Education**

Sponsored by **Andrew Gouardes**

Do you support this bill?