



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins Guides Senate Passage of Legislation to Expand Higher Education Access and Affordability

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS February 14, 2025

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(Albany, NY) – This week, the New York State Senate advanced a comprehensive legislative package under the leadership of Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, to strengthen New York’s Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and ensure that the state’s SUNY and CUNY institutions remain a pathway to economic opportunity—not an unattainable luxury.

“Education is the foundation of opportunity, and in New York, we are committed to ensuring that every student—regardless of income—has access to an affordable, high-quality college education. Our SUNY and CUNY institutions are among the best in the world, and no one should be held back from achieving their dreams because of financial barriers,” said **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins**. “I have fought to make higher education more accessible, and this package of bills continues that work by expanding TAP, increasing transparency, and ensuring that more students get the support they need. I want to thank Senator Stavisky and our Higher Education Committee for their leadership and dedication to making higher education more attainable for all New Yorkers.”

This legislative package includes the following key provisions:

- **More Time to Use TAP Awards** – This bill increases the time students can receive Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) funding from four years to six years, giving students more flexibility to complete their education.
- **Helping Homeless Students Get TAP** – This bill expands TAP eligibility to include students experiencing homelessness, ensuring they have the financial support they need to stay in school.
- **Clearer Tuition Policies for Students** – This bill requires colleges and universities to give students written notice about their tuition policies, so they fully understand their financial responsibilities.
- **Financial Aid for Graduate Students** – This bill allows graduate students at SUNY and CUNY to receive TAP funding, making it easier for them to afford an advanced degree.
- **Faster Financial Aid Decisions** – This bill requires the Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) to decide on a student’s financial aid application within 60 days, so students know what assistance they will receive without long delays.

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