



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

## Senator LaValle Questions Fairness of Governor's Free College Tuition Proposal

KENNETH P. LAVALLE January 15, 2009

Senator Kenneth P. LaValle reacted to Governor Paterson's proposal to provide free college tuition to certain college students with some reservation. "While the concept is laudable," said Senator LaValle, "we are dealing with limited resources. Therefore, it would be impossible to achieve fairness and balance to all students in all regions of the state."

According to Senator LaValle, Governor Paterson referred to the "Say Yes to Education" program in his State of the State when he spoke of offering free college tuition to students. Senator LaValle noted that, during the 2008 legislative session, he opposed a measure to establish the "Say Yes to Education Demonstration Program" because only inner city students would be eligible to participate in the program.

"As the former Chairman of the Senate Higher Education Committee, I have long been an advocate of improving access to higher education for all students," said Senator LaValle. "My concern with regard to the Governor's proposal is that the 'educational standards' established for eligibility may limit the ability of students from suburban areas to receive a

free education. Long Island residents pay among the highest school taxes in the state. If we are going to use taxpayer dollars to fund any college tuition initiative, certainly our students should be afforded an equal opportunity to take advantage of the program.”