



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Owen H. Johnson

## Alternatives to Suny/cuny Budget Cuts

OWEN H. JOHNSON November 18, 2009

| ISSUE: **HIGHER EDUCATION**

Senator Owen H. Johnson is alarmed at Governor Paterson's proposed mid-year \$114 million cut to all SUNY and CUNY schools. "These cuts are on top of a \$146 million 2008-09 State Budget reduction and a shameless raid of \$68 million in SUNY tuition revenues which were also raised," said Senator Johnson. "Considering the growing enrollment and economic benefits the SUNY and CUNY systems provide, they should not be subjected to the type of disproportionate budget cuts being proposed by Governor Paterson."

"No one disputes that New York is facing difficult choices in terms of closing the budget deficit, but we have to make smart cuts that won't jeopardize New York's ability to sustain an economic recovery," stated Senator Johnson. "The Governor's latest proposal to cut an additional \$114 million from New York's higher education funding will only compound the system's financial problems and hurt efforts to create new jobs and keep our youth in New York State."

"In this tough economy, investments in our SUNY and CUNY higher education systems are more important than ever," Senator Johnson added. "I have worked with my colleagues to champion a 5-year Capital Construction Plan for Long Island's state universities and community colleges that was included in the 2008 state budget. However, many of these

projects have been stalled by the Governor's office.

"SUNY institutions across the state have made great strides in research and innovation and generate a tremendous share of economic activity through public/private joint ventures," Senator Johnson said. "We should be supporting the continuation of these economic development achievements to help ensure the system's competitiveness and ability to create new jobs."

As the former chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator Johnson knows there are smarter ways and better methods available to address the current budget deficit. As an alternative to the cuts proposed by the Governor, Senator Johnson said he is in favor of increasing tuition for out-of-state students attending SUNY and CUNY schools. In a recent report by Comptroller Tom DiNapoli it is noted that SUNY charges, on average, \$8,463 less than other states for undergraduate out-of-state tuition. This one measure could generate millions in additional revenues over four years for our higher education system.

"We need to make smarter decisions regarding the crown jewel of our public higher education system," concluded Senator Johnson. "The higher education cuts proposed by the Governor are simply shortsighted and could discourage economic recovery."