



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

Senator LaValle Opposes Suny Empowerment Legislation

KENNETH P. LAVALLE August 4, 2010

| ISSUE: **CONTINUING EDUCATION**



Senator Kenneth P. LaValle today opposed SUNY empowerment legislation that would place an increased financial burden on middle-income students and endanger the access and affordability of New York's State University system.

The New York State Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act (PHEEIA), which was pulled from the floor twice because it lacked sufficient support to pass, would have authorized the trustees of the State University of New York (SUNY) and City University of New York (CUNY) to implement tuition increases up to 4 percent annually for SUNY four year colleges and allow for tuition differentials at university centers and medical schools up to 7 percent, without the approval of the Legislature.

"Access and affordability have been the lynchpins of our public higher education institutions," said Senator LaValle. "Eliminating the Legislature's oversight of tuition increases would jeopardize the opportunity for middle class students, who would bear the full brunt of tuition increases, to achieve their education goals. I believe the end result of this legislation would be devastating to our students and public education system."

Senator LaValle pointed out on the Senate floor that \$500 million in SUNY funding has been stripped over the past two years, and has not been replaced. If this legislation were enacted, it would be the second time in as many years that tuition has been increased. Under the proposed SUNY empowerment legislation, a yearly increase of seven percent would result in another tuition increase of \$1685 over five years.

“When Republicans were in the Senate Majority, we did everything we could to ensure that SUNY campuses were economic engines for this state, and today, they play a critical role in the economic stability of their respective regions,” continued Senator LaValle. “At the same time, we made it a priority to ensure access to a quality, affordable higher education. It is important that our SUNY and CUNY schools continue to offer an affordable, quality education and that they continue to make decisions that will allow New York to remain economically competitive today, tomorrow, and well into the future.”