



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

## Lavalle Calls on State to Use Portion of Fmap Funding to Pay Back Suny Students After Democrat-Led Tuition Raid

KENNETH P. LAVALLE August 6, 2010

| ISSUE: **CONTINUING EDUCATION**



Senator Kenneth P. LaValle, a long-time champion for the interests of SUNY students and their families, today called on the Governor and legislative leaders to use a portion of New York's share of the Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentages (FMAP) monies to pay back SUNY students. Senator LaValle noted that students were hit with tuition increases that were intended for higher education, but were instead swept by Democrats and used for other purposes.

Legislative Democrats recently swept over \$300 million in funding from tuition increases into the State's General Fund to help them balance the budget and pay for new spending. Making matters worse, Democrats also approved cuts to SUNY of more than \$325 million. Those sweeps and cuts robbed SUNY of any benefit from those tuition increases.

"Democrats in the Senate and Assembly broke a promise to SUNY students and their families by allowing the money obtained from tuition increases to be spent on unrelated programs rather than to

improve the quality of their education. Paying back those students is the only way we can rectify this situation,” said Senator LaValle, the former Chair and current ranking member of the Senate’s Higher Education Committee.

According to Senator LaValle, New York will receive approximately \$1.4 billion from the federal government for fiscal relief. Nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars will include unrestricted FMAP funds, and approximately \$600 million for schools that must be used to rehire teachers and support staff. Instead of using unrestricted monies to fund new spending approved by Democrats in the recently-enacted budget, Senator LaValle argued that the State should pay back students whose recent tuition increases were used to pay for spending unrelated to higher education.

“The SUNY system has been under attack by the Governor and Democrats who run the State Legislature in Albany. We must continue to do everything possible to make sure SUNY is a first-class institution that prepares young people for the challenges of tomorrow. It’s time to make SUNY whole,” Senator LaValle said.

Meanwhile, Democrats in Albany have repeatedly rejected Republican efforts to cap state spending or consider alternative cuts totaling billions of dollars. If a spending cap was in place, taxpayers would save \$7 billion next year and we could wipe out the entire projected budget deficit, LaValle explained.

“Fiscal discipline brought by a spending cap would make it easier to invest in our shared priorities like higher education,” LaValle concluded.