



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

Senator LaValle Comments on Suny Compensation Increases at NYS Senate Higher Education Hearing

KENNETH P. LAVALLE September 24, 2010

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Senator Ken LaValle, Ranking Republican on the NYS Senate's Higher Education Committee, issued the following statement at a public hearing held by the Committee today in Albany.

"If you want to know why people are so upset with their government and why they have lost faith in so many of their institutions, you don't have to look any further than this recent episode at SUNY.

Today's hearing has been called to seek more information about SUNY's decision to award raises of \$30,000 each to three top administrators.

I am not in a position to pass judgment about whether these individuals deserved these raises or not. I believe they are fine professionals who are part of a SUNY team.

However, common sense dictates that these raises were ill-timed and insensitive, and should be reconsidered in light of a number of factors.

During these difficult economic times, these raises are out of step with SUNY's mission of providing a first-class education for middle-class students, and it's incredibly tone-deaf to the legitimate economic concerns of both this institution and its rank-and-file educators and support staff.

At a time when middle-class families are doing more with less and other SUNY employees are being told to stay home and give back a portion of their pay each month, these raises have sent a terrible message.

Meanwhile, SUNY is facing significant cutbacks, along with hundreds of millions of dollars that were swept from a recent tuition hike into the State's General Fund so it could be used not for higher education but for other, non-higher education purposes.

You are asking the Governor and Legislature to provide you with more flexibility and greater autonomy to set tuition and run your own campuses. This action is a clear example of why I believe the Legislature must retain oversight of the SUNY system.

As the former Chairman and now ranking member of the Senate's Committee on Higher Education and a defender of the SUNY system, no one cares more deeply about SUNY.

Chancellor, you should do the right thing and reevaluate these pay hikes."