



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

## Senator Carlucci & Students Hosts College Affordability Rally

DAVID CARLUCCI March 23, 2015

| ISSUE: **SUNY (STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK)**



Senator David Carlucci was joined by students, faculty and staff from Rockland Community College for a rally in support of Senator Carlucci's "College Affordability" package.

"It is becoming harder and harder for middle class families to make a promise to their children that they will be able to attend college, without the probability of decades of debt to follow," said Senator Carlucci. As a new father I want to ensure that my son, along with all of the children in New York can receive a quality, affordable higher education."

In 2014 alone, private college tuition and fees at private nonprofit colleges climbed 3.7 percent on average. Public colleges and universities across the country have increased tuition to compensate for declining state funding and rising costs. Annual published tuition at four-year public colleges has risen by \$1,936, or 28 percent, since the 2007-08 school year.

The plan includes the following items:

1. Pre-paid College Tuition - Locks in present day tuition rates, that can be used in the future.
2. The New York Student Loan Interest Deduction - Matches the Federal Government deduction of up to \$2,500.
3. College Tuition Tax Credit - Doubles the College Tuition Tax Credit from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

“Senator Carlucci’s plan for a pre-paid college tuition program would be very beneficial for middle class families,” said Rockland Community College Student, and Student Council President Samantha Wertheim. “Currently, I am looking to transfer from Rockland Community College to a four year institution where there will be a big tuition increase. Unfortunately, I will most likely have to take out student loans. However, if my parents were able to participate in a pre-paid college tuition program it would be a big financial help. I would be able to completely focus on my academics without worrying about the enormous cost of tuition. I know students in Florida who participated in this pre-paid college tuition program and today are attending college debt free. Students across New York would be able to attend college, worry free.”

“I’m coming from the position where I was ineligible for financial aid due to my situation,” said Rockland Community College student Damien Ciuccio. “Because of that, I had to take out an Unsubsidized Federal Student Loan of \$5,000 in order to pay the \$4,200 yearly tuition at RCC. Taking into account interest rates, I will end up paying back to the federal government about \$8,000, which is about double RCC’s yearly tuition rate, and the same

amount that international students are made to pay.”

“Unfortunately, with the rising cost of tuition it places a heavy burden on both students and parents to make decisions based solely off finances,” said Rockland Community College student Ashley Pellegrino. “In order to relieve this burden on both my parents and myself, I chose to attend Rockland Community College. I am grateful for the M/TS Honors Program and the amount of money it saved me without compromising my education. Now, as I prepare to transfer, I am sincerely struggling with if I should attend an elite school and accumulate a large amount of college debt, or attend a less renowned, cheaper university. It is extremely unfortunate that students get accepted to competitive schools and cannot afford to attend them. I believe this program will alleviate some stress placed on middle class families and give students the education they prepared their entire lives for.”