



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Toby Ann Stavisky

## TAP Funding Increases for First Time in 14 Years

TOBY ANN STAVISKY May 7, 2014



**Flushing, NY**—Senator Toby Ann Stavisky (D-Flushing), Assemblywoman Nily Rozic (D, WF-Fresh Meadows and Chair of the NYPIRG Board of Directors Aileen Sheil joined the Queens College chapter of NYPIRG to praise the slight increase in Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) funding while calling attention to the urgent need for more tuition relief assistance.

The boost in maximum grant level from \$5,000 to \$5,165 in this year's budget was the first increase in Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) funding in 14 years.

“TAP was created as a fund for investment in the future of our state,” said **Senator Stavisky**. “To reaffirm that purpose, it must be updated to meet the needs of a 21<sup>st</sup> century student. That includes changes

so that it can serve the needs of homeless students, the needs of students with dependent children and the needs of graduate students.”

This long overdue increase of 3% is dwarfed by the rocketing cost of college, which has risen nearly 40% for undergraduate tuition, room and board at public institutions and 28% at private institutions between 2000-02 and 2011-12, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

“There is an urgent need to address the massive debt that’s already crushing our young people. Tying students to a lifetime of financial servitude as a condition of getting an education does not reflect our values,” said **Assemblywoman Rozic**. “In order to secure our economic future, we need to make quality education more affordable for all.”

Aside from raising the maximum award amount, TAP must also be improved to be more inclusive of all New York students, including those that are undocumented.

"It is vital that the maximum TAP award be increased to \$6,500 and that it is accessible to all students, regardless of documentation. New York State's Tuition Assistance Program should not be another block in the road preventing students from receiving an affordable higher education," said **Aileen Sheil, chair of NYPIRG's Board of Directors**.

“The Tuition Assistance Program is a vital resource for many New Yorkers attending college. Increasing the maximum reward to \$6,500 for all students will provide much-needed financial aid for increasingly expensive tuition. Additionally, the current award schedules for TAP are obsolete and exclude many individuals who need this assistance, which prevents access to quality education. These reforms would ensure that TAP meets the needs of New York’s students and families,” said **Assemblyman Braunstein**.