



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas D. Croci

SENATOR CROCI ANNOUNCES SENATE REPUBLICAN MAJORITY BUDGET PROVIDES NEW SAVINGS TO HELP MAKE COLLEGE MORE AFFORDABLE FOR MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES

THOMAS D. CROCI March 14, 2016

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PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Hauppauge, NY – Senator Thomas Croci (R, C, I – Sayville) and Senate Majority Leader John J. Flanagan announce that the Senate budget would include new and enhanced measures to provide significant savings for college students while also rejecting the use of taxpayers' money to give tuition to illegal immigrants. The Senate's budget proposal provides \$87 million to expand the income eligibility and award amounts for the Tuition Assistance Program and includes a total of \$295 million in tax savings with an increase in the tuition tax credit and creation of a new state income tax exemption.

Senator Flanagan said, "A college education is a necessity to succeed in today's job market, but unfortunately for many students, the high costs and the availability of state tuition assistance can be an obstacle to a bright future. The college affordability proposals outlined by the Senate Republican conference focus the state's resources where they are needed most -- to help more New Yorkers achieve their dreams of a higher education and successful career."

"The ability for New Yorkers to have access to affordable higher education is paramount for the success of our future generations – especially our middle income families," stated Senator Croci. "Increasing tuition assistance, creating tax exemptions on student loan interest, and

not rewarding people who are here illegally by providing them free college tuition on the backs of middle income tax payers, will remain a priority for me and the Senate Republican Conference.”

Rejects the Use of Taxpayer Dollars to Fund College Tuition for Illegal Immigrants

The Senate rejected an Executive Budget proposal that would cost state taxpayers \$27 million and reward people who are here illegally by giving them free college tuition. The measure would have extended all other criteria, exemptions or opportunities found within the education law - including all scholarship and tuition assistance programs funded with state tax dollars - to illegal immigrants while hardworking, middle-class families are already being forced to take out massive college loans to pay for higher education.

\$87 Million TAP Increase

The Senate’s proposal focuses on reducing college costs and includes a significant increase in support for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). The Senate budget increases income eligibility and TAP awards so that more middle class families can receive help with higher education expenses. When fully implemented in fall 2017, the Senate proposal will provide \$87 million in additional TAP awards, with a guarantee of \$1,000 to any student from a family with a net taxable income of less than \$100,000 - up from \$80,000. The increase is over two years, with \$38 million in additional TAP awards starting in fall 2016 and \$49 million in fall 2017.

New Tax Exemption to Save \$40 Million on Student Loan Payments

The Senate budget proposal creates a new state income tax exemption for student loan interest, saving eligible New Yorkers a total of \$40 million. Similar to the exemption already authorized by the federal government to reduce taxpayers’ gross income, the state would

allow individuals to reduce their adjusted gross income by up to \$2,500. The limit on modified adjusted gross income is \$160,000 if married filing a joint return; and \$80,000 if single, head of household, or qualifying widow(er).

\$255 Million Tuition Tax Credit Increase

The Senate increases the amount of the tuition tax credit to save students and their families a total of \$55 million in the first year, and \$255 million when fully implemented in 2022. The measure doubles the amount of qualified college expenses that can be claimed from \$10,000 to \$20,000 over five years; doubles the maximum amount of the credit allowed from \$400 to \$800 over five years; and indexes the qualified expenses and credit to the rate of inflation of the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI).

Legislation to Increase Transparency of Private College Data

While tuition and other cost controls continue to be implemented at New York's public colleges and universities, private college costs continue to skyrocket. To better assess the impact these costs are having on students and the college market as a whole, the Senate budget proposes legislation that increases accountability at New York State's private colleges and provides more transparency in the higher education marketplace.

The measure would require all non-public colleges to annually report to the Legislature on the following: factors that drive cost increases; tuition trends for the past six years and percentage of year-to-year increases; total cost of fees; if the institution has an endowment and the amount of such endowment; the average institutional financial aid package by income bracket; the average amount of debt a student has upon graduation by income bracket; graduation rates for four, five and six years and average debt associated with each; enrollment trends over the past six years; job placement rates for graduates of the

institution; the amount spent to educate students per FTE; the percentage of students who are TAP and Pell eligible; administrative and operating costs and the percentage of those costs funded by tuition; and cost saving measures implemented over the past six years, if any.

All media inquiries should be directed to Senator Croci's Communications Specialist, Christine Geed at (631) 398-8044 (call or text) or via email at geed@nysenate.gov. Inquiries for additional information should be directed to Senator Croci's Press Secretary, Jennifer Romero at (631) 513-5657 or via email at jromero@nysenate.gov.

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