



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Seward Includes Key Mandate Relief Funds in Senate Budget for Oneonta and Cortland

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ONEONTA, 03/17/16 -- State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) announced today that the New York State Senate budget resolution includes, at his insistence, \$400,000 for the cities of Cortland and Oneonta to help offset public safety costs generated due to being a SUNY host community.

“There is no doubt that hosting a SUNY school is a great benefit, however, there are added costs that local taxpayers must absorb,” said Senator Seward. **“Last year, I introduced legislation to**

provide mandate relief for SUNY host communities by shifting a portion of the police, fire, and code enforcement burden away from local governments. This special state funding will serve as a ‘pilot program’ and demonstrates the senate’s recognition of the need to assist our SUNY host communities.”

Significant student populations present several public policy challenges for local governments, one of which is providing adequate public safety services to both students and the public while striking the appropriate balance between other municipal needs and available resources.

While Senator Seward will continue to work toward a long term solution, he was able to generate support for a “pilot program” and included \$200,000 apiece (\$400,000 total) for Cortland and Oneonta in the New York State Senate budget resolution approved on March 14, 2016. This will serve as a template with an eye toward developing a reimbursement strategy to provide relief to all SUNY communities statewide in future years.

Senate and Assembly Budget Conference Committees are now working to negotiate a final state budget agreement that will be sent to the governor for his approval.

“I will be advocating strongly for Oneonta and Cortland to ensure that this key funding is included in the final state budget. Moving forward, a long-term strategy must be developed to assist SUNY host communities statewide. This is mandate relief that these communities need as they work to keep citizens safe, stay within the property tax cap, and meet other local needs,” Seward concluded.

Senator Seward’s legislation (S.4643), which includes a formula to distribute state aid to municipalities hosting four-year SUNY schools, has received the backing of local officials as well as the New York Conference of Mayors (NYCOM). The bill been referred to the Senate Finance Committee. Companion legislation (A.6416) has been introduced in the state assembly by Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton.

