



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

Senator Phillips Announces Bill To Help Make College More Affordable Passes Senate

ELAINE PHILLIPS June 8, 2018



Senator Elaine Phillips announced today that the New York State Senate has passed a bill, which she supported, to help alleviate the financial burden on many college students caused by the additional cost of textbooks and other course materials.

“All students, no matter their background, should have the opportunity to pursue an affordable higher education,” Senator Phillips said. “With new technological advancements, such as e-books, colleges and universities should offer students more affordable alternatives

to traditional textbooks which, according to research, can cost students around \$650 semester. This legislation will help reduce the financial burdens of obtaining an education by encouraging colleges to negotiate deals with publishers and by promoting pricing transparency and e-books.”

The bill, S.6608, would reduce the cost of textbooks by promoting pricing transparency and alternatives to conventional textbooks, such as e-books.

The average student spends more than \$1,200 per year on textbooks on top of the cost of tuition and fees, according to a recent College Board report. Under current law, publishers must make the price of a textbook readily available to the professor assigning the materials as well as the campus bookstore. In the event that the product is not available at the bookstore, the publishers and bookstore must work together to provide the best possible substitute for the student.

This new legislation helps reduce the cost of textbooks by requiring colleges and universities to adopt policies that allow the use of innovative pricing techniques and payment options for textbooks and other supplemental materials. Innovative pricing models allow an institution to negotiate with a publisher for a lower price than market value for access to digital instructional materials, which typically cost substantially less than the print versions. Students would have the option to pay for these materials as part of their tuition and fees, which can be covered by loans, grants, and scholarships.

The bill will be sent to the Assembly.