



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

NY Senate Republican Conference Slams Democrats For Giving Illegal Immigrants Free Tuition While Halting Applications For Struggling Citizen Students During Pandemic

SENATOR ROB ORTT July 20, 2020

| ISSUE: [DREAM ACT](#)



ALBANY, NY – The New York State Senate Republican Conference today slammed Democrats who have kept applications granting free tuition to illegal immigrants open while closing the Excelsior Scholarship application available to citizen students, whose families are struggling even more due to forced business closures during the coronavirus pandemic.

“Time and time again, Democrats show New Yorkers their true priorities and under One Party Rule, illegal immigrants come before hardworking, law-abiding New Yorkers. When Senate Democrats voted to create free tuition for illegal immigrants, Republicans said no. To add insult to injury, so many families are facing an even more dire financial hardship after Governor Cuomo forced their livelihoods shut. To close citizen students out of the application process while continuing to give illegal immigrants free tuition is ludicrous. New Yorkers shouldn’t be funding tuition for illegal immigrants at all, and we should be closing down that program permanently as we look to find savings in our budget,” said Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt.

Tuition for SUNY schools is due in August, leaving parents nervous as they check the still closed application page.

“Middle class, law-abiding, taxpaying parents are struggling right now. They and their children deserve answers. New York State should not be playing politics with their futures,” said Senator Pam Helming.

“If anyone ever needed a crystal clear example of the Senate Democrat’s ‘Bizzaro World’ priorities that put illegal immigrants first and hardworking, law-abiding taxpayers dead last, look no further than this latest shameful policy. In January 2019, Senate Democrats rammed through their so-called ‘DREAM Act’ giving free college to illegal immigrants. I voted no and said their DREAM Act was a nightmare for taxpayers to the tune of \$27 million annually. Now in July 2020, Senate Democrats show they’ve learned nothing as they’re shamefully keeping open applications granting free tuition to illegal immigrants while closing Excelsior Scholarship applications to citizen students, many of whom have families that are financially reeling due to the Coronavirus outbreak. This latest policy hypocrisy shows that the Senate Democrats continue catering to their illegal immigrant base while law-abiding taxpayers get another slap in the face,” said Senator Daphne Jordan.

“There may be disagreement as to whether those who are here illegally should be getting the benefits of legal citizens, but there should be no disagreement that state government should not be discriminating against citizen students and their families who are part of the Excelsior Program and who are anxiously waiting for their tuition relief applications to be processed. Every legislator took an oath of office to represent the interests of the legal citizens of this state and nation and they will have to answer to those voters in November if they fail to uphold that oath,” said Senator Jim Tedisco.

“We have law-abiding, hardworking families across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions struggling to make ends meet, paying outrageously high state and local taxes, and going into huge amounts of debt trying to afford college for their children. It’s not right to ignore the needs and the hopes of these families while we turn around and continue to deliver hard-earned taxpayer dollars to provide free college tuition for illegal immigrant families,” said Senator Tom O’Mara.

“The thousands of New York students who have been shut out of this application process with no explanation from the state deserve immediate answers. Countless New Yorkers are facing unprecedented economic hardship as a result of state actions and now the state is just adding insult to injury by leaving them in this limbo. It is absolutely unacceptable and the state needs to get its priorities in order,” said Senator Sue Serino.

“Only in NYC-Democrat-ruled New York would you send law-abiding, taxpaying families to the back of the line while giving illegal immigrants preferential treatment when it comes to college tuition aid. Every parent and student who was counting on the Excelsior Scholarship for the fall semester and is now desperately worrying about how to pay the August bill deserves an explanation as to why they’ve been put on hold while applications and aid are flowing for illegal immigrants seeking a free college education at taxpayer expense. It’s outrageous, unfair, and it symbolizes everything that’s wrong in Albany under One Party

Rule,” said Senator George M. Borrello.

“Many New Yorkers have suffered and continue to experience significant challenges as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. While I believe access to a quality education is important, we should not be prioritizing one segment of the state’s population, especially during this difficult time. Our focus must be on providing assistance to the state’s hardworking residents, families, business owners, and taxpayers who are struggling,” said Senator Joe Griffo.

“Senate Democrats have been clear about their priorities since day one – those that break the rules come first and those that follow the rules take a back seat. Senate Republicans have always stood with law-abiding citizens and this case is no exception,” said Senator Rich Funke.

“It is unconscionable that Democrats would punish students whose only crime is that they are citizens. It is no wonder that hard-working New York families are leaving the state in droves,” said Senator Andrew Lanza.

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