



The State University of New York
Student Assembly

Conner A. Wolfe
University College Representative

State University Plaza, N501
353 Broadway, Albany, NY 12246
P: (518) 320-1288 | F: (518) 320-1557
www.sunysa.org

RESOLUTION

TO: Members of the Executive Committee

FROM: Conner A. Wolfe, University College Representative

ENDORSED BY: Vrinda Kumar, University College Representative, Student Association President at SUNY Plattsburgh

DATE: August 11, 2017

SUBJECT: Resolution for Maintenance of Effort

Action Requested

The Student Assembly of The State University of New York calls upon Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to sign amendment to education law S.1596-A/A.934-A "Maintenance of Effort."

Resolution

We recommend that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York (SUNYSA) adopt the following resolution:

Whereas Maintenance of Effort, as assured under the NY-SUNY 2020 plan, pledged that the State of New York would pay for the contractual and mandatory operating expenses of The State University of New York and its member campuses while tuition increases capped at \$200 per undergraduate per year would be used to pay for support services for students¹; and

Whereas After years of significant underfunding leading to an increased financial burden on students and a growing budget deficit at The State University of New York, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo vetoed Maintenance of Effort in December,

¹ "Invest in Public Colleges: New York Must Boost State Support for SUNY and CUNY," New York Public Interest Research Group, 1.

2016 after it was approved by both houses of the New York State Legislature with overwhelming bipartisan support; and

Whereas As a direct result of the 2016 veto and insignificant support from the State of New York since 2011, student tuition at The State University of New York increased by 30% while the investment of the State of New York has remained largely flat²; and

Whereas The failure of the State of New York to meaningfully invest in the future of The State University of New York has caused growing and perpetual budget deficits at the 64 campuses and The State University of New York as a whole; and

Whereas Without adequate public funding for inevitable mandatory costs, The State University of New York cannot improve full-time faculty-to-student ratios, provide adequate counseling and mentorship services, or fund support services critical for student success; and

Whereas As of August, 2017, The State University of New York has yet to receive the essential state funding funding to cover naturally rising mandatory costs such as salary increases, utility expenditures, and costs associated with facility usage; and

Whereas The students of The State University of New York are still waiting for the State of New York to significantly invest in our future through meaningful support of public higher education and associated mandatory operating costs; and

Whereas Students have now been called upon to make up for six years of significant underfunding of mandatory operating costs at New York's two public university systems; and

Whereas Students are not bottomless ATMs that can continuously be called upon to fill budget deficits caused by a lack of state investment; and

Whereas A full Maintenance of Effort from the State of New York inherently eliminates the need for need for further tuition hikes and increased financial strain on students; and

Whereas Higher education is a public good on par with K-12 education and basic infrastructure; and

² "Invest in Public Colleges: New York Must Boost State Support for SUNY and CUNY," New York Public Interest Research Group, 1.

Whereas As a public higher education system, the State of New York has an obligation to meaningfully support the students of The State University of New York; and

Whereas every New Yorker has the right to access an affordable and quality higher education through The State University of New York; and

Whereas An imbalance and lack of public funding support inhibits the right of all New Yorkers to access a quality higher education; and

Whereas The State University of New York, as an affordable institution of higher education, has the potential to provide unprecedented opportunities for the students, faculty, and staff it consists of as well as the entirety of the State of New York; and

Whereas The State University of New York is in need of increased investment to become a world-class higher education institution; and

Whereas on June 5, 2017, the Student Assembly of The State University of New York released an online petition in partnership with the New York Public Interest Research Group to call upon Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to sign Maintenance of Effort; and

Whereas As of August 11, 2017, this petition has received approximately 561 signatures including 475 from 44 campuses of The State University of New York³; and

Whereas This petition has been endorsed by the SUNY Plattsburgh Student Association; and

Whereas through the groundbreaking Excelsior Scholarship, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo has demonstrated an understanding of the right of all New Yorkers to access a quality higher education through a public university;

Whereas providing access to affordable higher education through the Excelsior Scholarship does not guarantee universal access to the right of a quality higher education; and

Whereas the most recent Maintenance of Effort provision was unanimously passed by both houses of the New York State Legislature; and

³ "Petition for New York State Maintenance of Effort Funding at SUNY and CUNY," Student Assembly of The State University of New York, June 5, 2017, <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfJaJ-fNJEfTElpTLQGssVFOkOs-quaDwr3kCFtSAUFBn7-lw/viewform>.

Whereas It is time for the State of New York to fulfill its obligation and support our public higher education systems and the future of the students they enroll and the State of New York; therefore be it

Resolved that the Student Assembly of The State University of New York, representing the 600,000 students currently enrolled in The State University of New York, calls upon Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to meaningfully recognize the right of all New Yorkers to access a quality higher education through a public university system by signing amendment to education law S.1596-A/A.934-A “Maintenance of Effort,” and in doing so, meaningfully invest in the future of the State of New York and the 600,000 students currently seeking to better themselves and their communities through enrollment in The State University of New York; and, finally, be it

Resolved that within 20 days upon its passing, the Student Assembly of the State University of New York will forward copies of this resolution to Governor Andrew M. Cuomo.