



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

## Senate Passes Legislation To Help Reduce The Cost Of Higher Education

JOHN J. FLANAGAN June 7, 2018

| ISSUE: COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY, EDUCATION, HIGHER EDUCATION



Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan (2<sup>nd</sup> Senate District) announced that the New York State Senate has passed legislation that would help alleviate the financial burden on many college students caused by the additional cost of textbooks and other course materials. The bill (**S6608**), sponsored by Senator Pamela Helming (54<sup>th</sup> Senate District), would reduce the cost of textbooks by promoting pricing transparency and alternatives to conventional textbooks, such as e-books.

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 measure builds upon the Senate Majority's ongoing commitment to preparing students for bright futures by making higher education more affordable. The 2018-19 Enacted Budget includes more than \$7.6 billion to support higher education across the state including record-high levels of more than \$1 billion in funding for tuition assistance and financial aid this year; a restoration of \$35 million in Bundy Aid; and an overall funding increase in base aid funding for community college by \$18 million – \$12 million for SUNY and \$6 million for CUNY – to help prevent tuition hikes.

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*“As parents throughout our state do all they can to help ensure a better future for their children, it is imperative that New York State is a partner in that effort to help our young students achieve the American dream. By reducing the cost of educational materials, this legislation will help relieve some of the burden our hardworking families and students face. It builds upon efforts the Senate has already advanced to help make college more affordable for all of our residents,” stated Senator Flanagan.*

Senator Helming said, “New York’s students deserve the opportunity to pursue an affordable higher education. They are the future of our great Empire State. As State Senator, I have heard directly from local students and families about the burden of rising textbook costs. Our colleges and universities need to be more flexible to help students get the tools they need to succeed at an affordable price. My legislation is an important step in the fight to ensure that students across New York State have access to a quality, affordable education.”

This legislation will help reduce costs for students by encouraging colleges to negotiate with publishers to get the best possible deal for their students.”

Currently, 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 existing 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.

The bill has been sent to the Assembly.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2017-S6608**

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- Introduced
  
  - - In Committee Assembly
    - In Committee Senate
  
  - - On Floor Calendar Assembly
    - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
  - - Passed Assembly

- Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Relates to reducing the cost of textbooks for students of institutions of higher education

June 07, 2017

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Pamela Helming

Do you support this bill?