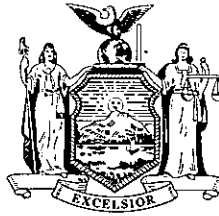


THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



JAMES L. SEWARD
SENATOR, 51ST DISTRICT

September 25, 2015

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Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Executive Chamber
New York State Capitol
Albany, N.Y. 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I am writing in support for the inclusion of the enclosed language (senate bill 4643) and for appropriations thereof, in the 2016-17 proposed executive budget.

This aid proposal would help offset public safety costs to municipalities that host four-year state university of New York (SUNY) institutions and reduce municipal property tax levies. Aid would be distributed according to a formula that takes into consideration the cost of providing public safety services to SUNY students, aid and incentives to municipalities assistance, and the total student population of SUNY institutions.

According to a study by Dr. Laurence Malone, professor of economics at Hartwick College, the decades-long trend of declining manufacturing in upstate New York and the resulting increase in the stock of vacant and tax-exempt properties held by governmental and non-profit organizations have increased the burden on property tax payers. Municipalities that host SUNY institutions are further burdened by student populations that benefit from public safety services, which are funded primarily by property taxes. The size of these populations can be quite significant. For example, students represent thirty-three percent of the population of the city of Cortland and fifty-three percent of the city of Oneonta. There is no doubt that these institutions provide innumerable benefits to their communities, including many that are difficult to quantify, but the associated public safety costs are primarily borne by property tax payers. In Cortland, public safety services constitute forty percent of the city's budget and forty-four percent of the city of Oneonta's budget.

In the spirit of the property tax cap, which as you know was extended in bipartisan fashion and reported to be tremendously successful in saving New Yorkers billions of dollars, this measure would provide additional relief to both taxpayers and local governments. It will also encourage local governments to remain below the property tax cap threshold and it is consistent with the goals of the local government citizens reorganization empowerment grant to encourage the sharing of municipal services, as inter-municipal agreements to determine the aid distribution amongst municipalities wherein SUNY institutions are located, are required.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely yours,

JAMES L. SEWARD
State Senator

