



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

Senate Majority Advances Legislation to Make Higher Education More Affordable, Expand Access to Tuition Assistance, and Increase Transparency for Students

LEA WEBB February 14, 2025

| ISSUE: **TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP), HIGHER EDUCATION**

(BINGHAMTON, N.Y.) Senator Webb and the Senate Democratic Majority advanced legislation to make higher education more affordable and accessible for all New Yorkers. This legislative package builds on our ‘Turn on the Tap’ initiatives from last session, when we increased the income threshold eligibility limit, allowing more of our state’s students to now be able to receive state aid.

This package of bills works to address the needs of all our state’s students. It includes legislation which aims to expand access to New York’s Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) by extending TAP award benefits to cover graduate level students; increasing the maximum time limit to receive TAP awards; and expanding TAP eligibility to include students experiencing homelessness. Additionally, it includes legislation which aims to increase transparency for students by ensuring educational institutions inform students about tuition liability and by establishing a time frame within which the State Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) must determine students’ financial aid eligibility.

Said Senator Lea Webb, “Last year, I led on legislation to raise the minimum TAP award from \$500 to \$1,000, ensuring that this assistance provides some real help with the cost of college,

allowing more students to access a high-quality education while staying in NY. This year, we are expanding our efforts to “Turn on the Tap” to make a high-quality education affordable and accessible to more of our students and working families. As a member of our Senate Higher Education Committee, it is paramount that we continue to advance policies that make our colleges and universities more affordable and accessible to all.”

The legislation passed by the Senate Democratic Majority includes:

Increases the maximum time limits for TAP awards: This legislation, [S.3779](#), sponsored by Senator Andrew Gounardes, increases the maximum time limit for Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) awards from four to six years.

? Expands TAP awards to students experiencing homelessness: This legislation, [S.27](#), sponsored by Senator Robert Jackson, expands Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) eligibility to make it available for students experiencing homelessness.

? Informing students about their tuition liability: This legislation, [S.78](#), sponsored by Senator John Liu, would require colleges, universities, professional, proprietary and graduate schools to provide written notice to all students of the institution’s tuition liability policies.

? Establishes graduate degree level TAP awards: This legislation, [S.3810](#), sponsored by Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, extends Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) benefits to graduate students who need financial aid during their time at SUNY or CUNY.

? Establishes a time frame for the HESC to determine financial aid eligibility: This legislation, [S.3738](#), sponsored by Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, would require The Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) to make financial aid determinations within 60 days of receiving a student’s completed financial aid application.

The Senate Majority remains strongly committed to ensuring that our state-funded comprehensive network of SUNY and CUNY educational institutions remain affordable and accessible for all New Yorkers. Higher education should not be a luxury available only to the wealthy. Instead, it should remain an attainable pathway to the middle-class that all New Yorkers can pursue. Receiving an advanced degree should not be a financial burden that sets an individual back; rather, it should propel them forward towards a better and brighter future.

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