



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

## **Senator Maziarz Opposes Silver's Proposal to Provide College Aid for Illegal Immigrants**

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Senator George Maziarz (R-Newfane) announced today his opposition to Assemblyman Sheldon Silver's proposal to provide college aid for illegal immigrants. The proposal would allow tens of thousands of illegal immigrants living in New York State to become eligible to receive government financial aid to attend college, and is projected to cost the taxpayers of New York State millions of dollars.

"In New York State today, many families are struggling to afford higher education for their children," said Senator Maziarz. "College tuition is getting more expensive, and it is the obligation of the government to provide as much assistance to the citizens of this country and state first before the idea of providing assistance to illegal immigrants should even be discussed."

Silver's bill follows the Obama administration "Dream Act" initiative this week that defers deportation for young illegal immigrants and makes it easier for them to get better jobs and pay for college. Under New York law, illegal immigrant students already pay the lower public college tuition for state residents, rather than the higher rate for those coming from outside New York.

"It seems to me that Mr. Silver's priorities are somewhat out of whack", said Maziarz. "Instead of kowtowing to the growing population of illegal immigrants in his district, maybe he should refocus his efforts on protecting the interests of hardworking and struggling people across this state who are finding it tougher and tougher to make ends meet."

The bill would provide illegal immigrants access to the Tuition Assistance Program that provides grants to hundreds of thousands of students each year in public and private colleges. While the bill would make TAP available for illegal immigrants, TAP was discontinued for graduate students who are legal residents beginning in the 2010-11 state budget as part of spending cuts in a fiscal crisis in a policy that continues today.

"If someone could explain to me how cutting the available pool of financial assistance for legal residents while at the same time expanding the pool of resources for illegal immigrants is a good idea, I'd be more than willing to listen. That being said, I don't expect anyone to come up with a logical justification. That is why I flat out oppose this proposal," said Maziarz.

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