



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## **Lanza & Malliotakis Introduce Legislation to Help Students Handle Rising Cost of College**

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*Concerns raised after allegations of flawed system*

With graduation season upon us, Senator Andrew Lanza and Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis (R,C,I-Brooklyn, Staten Island) are introducing two pieces of legislation to help local college students deal with the rising cost of an education. Assembly Bill 9554/Senate 7248 would increase the maximum household income cap for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) from \$80,000 to \$100,000, while Assembly Bill 9555/Senate 7249 would restore the TAP program for graduate students. The two pieces are aimed at easing the financial burden many students face following college graduation. Today, the average New York college graduate leaves school carrying nearly \$26,000 in debt.

“New York’s Tuition Assistance Program is an investment in the future of our students and the communities they live in,” said Senator Andrew Lanza. “It is our hope that expanding tuition assistance initiatives such as TAP can help make college affordable for more families on Staten Island.”

“The cost of college is becoming increasingly unaffordable, and the average student debt in the United States has grown larger than both auto loan and credit card debt,” said Malliotakis. “With college graduation ceremonies happening across the state, it is critical

we highlight the debt crisis our students are facing and that government act to help them. Expanding tuition assistance eligibility and reinstating the TAP program for graduate study will provide the vital assistance our middle-class students need to obtain an education and achieve their dreams.”

Assembly Bill 9554 would increase the household income cap for the TAP, which has not increased since 2000 when it went from \$50,500 to \$80,000. The change of the income cap threshold would bring the TAP program in line with increasing tuition prices and inflation values while generally increasing college eligibility for New Yorkers. Under the proposal, the new household income cap would be set at \$100,000.

Assembly Bill 9555 would restore graduate programs as eligible for approval under TAP. In 2010, due to budge constraints, graduate programs were cut from the Tuition Assistance Program. If graduate students were reinstated in the program, it is estimated it would cost only \$3 million annually.

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