



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

Lanza, Malliotakis Continue Fight to Expand Tuition Assistance for College Students

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Today, State Sen. Andrew Lanza (R,C,I-Staten Island) and Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis (R,C,I – Staten Island/Brooklyn) held a press conference in the New York State Capitol highlighting the need to expand New York's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) to help middle-class families with the growing expense of higher education.

Malliotakis and Lanza have re-introduced legislation that aims to ease the financial burden many college students face upon receiving their diplomas. The first measure (A.3049/S.2130) would increase the maximum household income cap to be eligible for the TAP program from \$80,000 to \$100,000, an amount that hasn't been adjusted since 2000. The second (A.3051/S.2129) would restore the TAP program for graduate students, which was eliminated in 2010 when the state faced a \$13 billion budget deficit.

"It is well known that the cost of college is becoming less and less affordable and the state's tuition assistance program has not kept up with the rate of inflation and the rising costs of college tuition," said Malliotakis. "The average student debt in the U.S. has grown larger than both auto loan and credit card debt. Last year, the average New York college graduate carried nearly \$26,000 in debt and that doesn't even include graduate degrees. This is an unimaginable financial burden which no student should have to face upon graduation. Our focus during these trying times should be to expand TAP for our citizens who depend on this financial support for higher education."

In 2010, TAP was reduced by \$49.7 million, and monetary awards given to students in need were also reduced. Included in this elimination was all TAP funding for graduate students, which cost just under \$3 million annually. Since these cuts were made, the state has pushed for proposals that would cost significantly more than the common-sense TAP funding.

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