



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

Sanders Introduces Bill to Allow Students to Attend Community College For Free

JAMES SANDERS JR. February 1, 2016



State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village) introduced legislation (S6598) on January 29th that would allow students to attend community colleges statewide for free. It is called the New York Promise Program and would provide a tuition waiver in the form of a grant to those who qualify.

Applicants for the New York Promise Program would need to be enrolled in a community college and meet the following criteria:

- Taking courses required for an associate's degree, a program in career and technical education or a one-year curriculum for students who plan to transfer to another college
- Resident of New York for at least twelve months prior to enrollment
- Received their high school diploma or GED in New York
- Enrolled within six months of graduating high school or receiving their GED
- 2.5 GPA or better
- Accepted all state and federal aid grants available
- Not completed more than 90 college credit hours

“For far too long, a lack of financial means has prevented bright young people from becoming the stars they were destined to be,” Sanders said. “The New York Promise Program will ensure that our children have access to the educational opportunities necessary to compete in today’s economy.”

By 2020, an estimated 35 percent of job openings will require at least a bachelor's degree and 30 percent will require some college or an associate's degree. Some 40 percent of college students in America are enrolled in a community college.

Sanders’ legislation is modeled after a similar program that was signed into law in Oregon in July. President Obama also has a comparable initiative called America's College Promise with the goal of making community college as free and universal as high school.