



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senator Ortt Rejects Idea of Sanctuary Campuses

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I have serious concerns about a dangerous and dire message that is being circulated publically to college students – our future leaders of tomorrow. In the months following this year’s presidential election, a movement to establish “sanctuary campuses” has erupted among several private and public institutions. And, as a member of the state Senate Committee on Higher Education, I will do everything in my power to keep that from happening.

I recently voiced my frustration in a letter to the SUNY Board of Trustees urging them to reject such a reckless policy and consider the potentially devastating long-term ramifications for our universities and students.

The movement supports undocumented students. It calls for campuses to continue components of President Obama's unilateral 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) ahead of – and in spite of – the new President and Congress in 2017.

Bottom line – sanctuary campuses are a blatant disregard of federal law, and send the wrong message to students that violating the law is acceptable. University staff would be able to refuse to assist federal authorities in deporting illegal immigrants. Having a free pass in committing a flagrant violation of our laws at the expense of law-abiding New Yorkers is an outrage and downright offensive to our hard-working families.

Adopting sanctuary campuses would have disastrous outcomes. Billions of dollars in federal education aid could be at risk. That federal aid is what an overwhelming majority of hard-working college students rely on to afford their education. Moreover, many of these students are already struggling to pay their way due to the rising cost of college tuition. The move would only further burden students and families, causing many to reconsider if a college education is worth it.

Instead of becoming entangled in unnecessary partisan posturing, the SUNY system should take a hard stance on opposing sanctuary campuses. We need to shift our focus on expanding financial and career opportunities for our students and helping them to achieve the American dream.