



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

Senator Helming's Bill to Help Make College Affordable Passes Senate

SENATOR PAM HELMING June 8, 2018

GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming today announced that the New York State Senate recently passed a bill that she sponsors to help alleviate the financial burden on many college students caused by the additional cost of textbooks and other course materials. The bill (S.6608) would reduce the cost of textbooks by promoting pricing transparency and alternatives to conventional textbooks, such as e-books.

“New York’s students deserve the opportunity to pursue an affordable higher education. They are the future of our great Empire State. As State Senator, I have heard directly from local students and families about the burden of rising textbook costs. Our colleges and universities need to be more flexible to help students get the tools they need to succeed at an affordable price. My legislation is an important step in the fight to ensure that students across New York State have access to a quality, affordable education. This legislation will help reduce costs for students by encouraging colleges to negotiate with publishers to get the best possible deal for their students,” Senate Helming said.

The average student spends more than \$1,200 per year on textbooks on top of the cost of tuition and fees, according to a recent College Board report. Under current law, publishers must make the price of a textbook readily available to the professor assigning the materials as well as the campus bookstore. In the event that the product is not available at the

bookstore, the publishers and bookstore must work together to provide the best possible substitute for the student.

This new legislation helps reduce the cost of textbooks by requiring colleges and universities to adopt policies that allow the use of innovative pricing techniques and payment options for textbooks and other supplemental materials. Innovative pricing models allow an institution to negotiate with a publisher for a lower price than market value for access to digital instructional materials, which typically cost substantially less than the print versions. Students would have the option to pay for these materials as part of their tuition and fees, which can be covered by loans, grants, and scholarships.

The measure builds upon the Senate's ongoing commitment to preparing students for bright futures by making higher education more affordable. This year's state budget includes more than \$7.6 billion to support higher education across the state, including record-high levels of more than \$1 billion in funding for tuition assistance and financial aid this year; a restoration of \$35 million in Bundy Aid; and an overall funding increase in base aid funding for community college by \$18 million – including \$12 million for SUNY – to help prevent tuition hikes.

The bill will be sent to the Assembly.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2017-S6608

- Introduced
 - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
 - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
 - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to reducing the cost of textbooks for students of institutions of higher education

June 07, 2017

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Pamela Helming**

Do you support this bill?