



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Sen. Griffo: Not providing free college tuition to Gold Star families disappointing

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO April 11, 2019

State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, today expressed his dismay and disappointment that the Assembly Higher Education Committee recently voted down a bill (A2991) that would have provided free college tuition to Gold Star families. Sen. Griffo also said he appreciates that Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon, D-Utica, who is on the committee, voted in support of Gold Star and military families and that he had hoped other committee Democrats would have done likewise.

As part of the legislation, dependent family members of New York State military personnel who die on state or federal active duty would receive free tuition and room and board at a CUNY or SUNY institution.

State Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, the Democrat from Manhattan who chairs the Assembly's Higher Education Committee, stated that the scholarships weren't appropriate because they would be deemed an "entitlement."

In response, Sen. Griffo said not advancing the legislation was another example of Democrats in Albany having the wrong priorities, especially given the fact that they supported \$27 million to provide free college tuition to the children of undocumented immigrants in the state budget passed earlier this month.

A companion bill (S193) in the Senate sponsored by state Sen. Robert Ortt, R-C-I-North Tonawanda, which is being cosponsored by Sen. Griffo, has been in the Senate's Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee since early January. This is the same bill that Senate Republicans offered as an amendment to the Dream Act that was passed by Senate Democrats earlier this year. However, Democrats in the Senate chose not to adopt the amendment, expressing their own desire to deny Gold Star families this benefit.

"In light of this, I am calling on the Senate's Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee to advance this legislation as soon as possible because it is the right, appropriate and honorable thing to do," Sen. Griffo said. "While Democrats quickly passed a bill providing free college tuition to the children of undocumented immigrants, this bill has languished in committee since Jan. 9. What message does this send to the children and families of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving our country? We should be doing whatever we can to help the families of our fallen heroes, not potentially limiting their opportunities."

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