



**C C S D**  
CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities

**Lennyn Jacob, Secretary**  
**CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities**

## **Testimony at 2021 Higher Education Joint Legislative Budget Hearing**

**February 4, 2021**

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Good Afternoon Distinguished Members of the State Legislature,

My name is Lennyn Jacob. I'm a student activist and most proud to be a loving mother of a neurodiverse son with autism. I served for 12 years as a Teaching Assistant for children with disabilities with the DOE in the Bronx and chose to further my education at Bronx Community College. I proudly serve as the Treasurer of the CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities (CCSD) at BCC Chapter, majoring in Nuclear Medicine Technology. I was recently elected as Secretary for the CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities (CCSD), the university-wide group that represents all CUNY students with disabilities.

According to CUNY's Office of Institutional Research, there are more than 1,800 CUNY students with disabilities enrolled in degree programs in my proud borough known as Da Bronx. We all rely on reasonable accommodations from our colleges to have an equal opportunity to succeed, especially in the area of distance learning made necessary because of COVID-19.

The enrollment of students with disabilities at CUNY is at an all-time high, with more than 11,000 of us enrolled at our University. At CUNY, our disabled student enrollment has grown by more than 50 percent over the past two decades and yet, our State funding for crucial accommodations and support services for these students has remained flat over the past 27 years.

The CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities (CCSD) supports the New York State Education Department's \$7 million budget request to enhance support services for students with disabilities state-wide. This new source of funding would supplement, not replace, existing college and university support for students with disabilities. CCSD enthusiastically supports the State Education Department's budget request for students with disabilities that would be the first of its kind in the nation, allowing New York to lead the way for the rest of the country. My hope is that this would also increase the likelihood of success for my son and others like him who I encourage to come to CUNY to better their lives and the lives of their families.

Thank you.