

# Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Jonathan Monfiletto – 315-568-9816

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

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.

*Senator Helming represents the 54<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which consists of Seneca and Wayne Counties, parts of Cayuga and Ontario Counties, and the towns of Lansing and Webster. For more information, please visit Senator Helming's [website](#), or follow @SenatorHelming on Facebook or Twitter.*

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