



March 29, 2018

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Andrew M. Cuomo:

The New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) urges you to support low income New York student financial aid and child care programs in this year's budget. The proposed \$22 million cuts to higher education opportunity programs in the Executive's proposed budget must be restored – and enhanced – in the FY 2018-19 final budget.

These programs are key vehicles for degree completion among the most economically disadvantaged New York college students by providing extra resources that includes tutoring, advisement, textbook vouchers, and, in some cases, help for transportation. These programs have demonstrated successes. For example, CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) doubles graduation rates and is a national model for college success. It must be expanded to more students, not scaled back.

We urge you to restore and expand:

- The \$2.5 million in proposed cuts to Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP).
- The 5.9 million in proposed cuts to Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP).
- The \$5.4 million in proposed cuts to Educational Opportunity Program (EOP).
- The \$8.3 million proposed cuts to Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK)/College Discovery.
- The \$35.1 million in proposed cuts to the Bundy financial aid program

The proposal cuts total 21.45% overall, which can devastate these essential programs. Through the restoration and expansion of funding to higher education opportunity programs, the Senate can ensure that all New Yorkers have access to the quality higher education they need to improve themselves.

We also urge you to restore the \$2 million cut to child care centers at CUNY & SUNY and include the Assembly's proposed \$25 million in funding for the Martin Luther King Jr. scholarship for non-tuition expenses in the enacted budget.

Sincerely,

Smitha Varghese
Chair, Board of Directors



March 29, 2018

The Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the New York State Assembly
LOB 932
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Speaker Carl E. Heastie:

On behalf of the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), I write to thank the Assembly Majority for standing up for New York's most vulnerable students by restoring the devastating cuts important college financial aid programs that were included in the executive budget as well as the 20% increase in funding for college opportunity programs. In addition, we support the Assembly's budget plan which includes a \$25 million appropriation through the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship for non-tuition college expenses.

New York State's two premier institutions of public higher education were founded with the intention of serving the educationally and economically disadvantaged and it is these populations that depend on higher education opportunity programs for their academic success.

The executive's budget plan cut by 21.45% important opportunity programs. Through the restoration and expansion of funding to higher education opportunity programs, the Assembly's plan would, if enacted, ensure that more low income New Yorkers have access to the quality higher education they need to improve themselves and their college academic experience.

We will do what we can to help make the Assembly budget a reality, and once again, New York's college and university students appreciate the work of your House.

Sincerely,

Smitha Varghese
Chair, Board of Directors



March 29, 2018

The Honorable John J. Flanagan
Majority Leader of the New York State Senate
Room 330, State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator John J. Flanagan:

The New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) urges you to support low income New York student financial aid and child care programs in this year's budget.

The proposed \$22 million cuts to higher education opportunity programs in the Executive's proposed budgets must be restored – and enhanced – in the FY 2018-19 final budget.

These programs are key vehicles for degree completion among the most economically disadvantaged New York college students by providing extra resources that includes tutoring, advisement, textbook vouchers, and, in some cases, help for transportation. These programs have demonstrated successes. For example, CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) doubles graduation rates and is a national model for college success. It must be expanded to more students not scaled back.

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Sincerely

Smitha Varghese
Chair, Board of Directors

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