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**NYPIRG URGES GOVERNOR CUOMO AND LAWMAKERS TO INVEST IN HIGHER EDUCATION
RELEASES POLICY PAPER DOCUMENTING THE DECADE-LONG SHIFT IN COLLEGE COSTS
FROM THE STATE TO COLLEGE STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

(Albany, N.Y.) Over the past decade, New York frozen state support for colleges and universities and shifted increasing expenses to college students and their families. That's according to a report released today by the New York Public Interest Research Group, Inc. (NYPIRG). NYPIRG urged that Governor Cuomo and state lawmakers reverse that trend and instead enhance state support for colleges and universities as they negotiate a new budget.

The report was issued to all members of the state Legislature and the governor's office as part of an ongoing effort by college advocates to enhance New York's support of institutions of higher education. The [report](#) highlighted changes in New York's approaches to funding higher education, including:

- Freezing Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) awards at 2011 levels has increased financial stresses on both public and independent colleges and universities. In 2011, the state ended its practice of raising the maximum TAP award to match the cost of public college tuition. Instead, it required the colleges to meet the financial need of the poorest students. That resulting "TAP Gap" has strained the finances of State University and City University of New York colleges and universities. Moreover, it has stopped the increases in state financial aid from TAP to independent colleges and universities adding to their financial difficulties.
- Annual increases in public college tuition, as well as freezing state support, have shifted the costs of higher education from the state to students and their families. NYPIRG estimated that increasing public college tuition since 2011 has cost students at least \$2.5 billion – even when accounting for financial aid.
- New York State's community college tuition ranks among the highest in the nation. And that these colleges have had to hike tuition to offset dramatically dropping enrollments which makes the cost of attending those colleges even higher.
- Financial support through the state's "opportunity programs" has remained flat over the past five years. Inflation costs alone, have eroded the benefits of these programs.

NYPIRG urged that as the governor and state lawmakers are negotiating the state budget they:

- Reform the TAP system to eliminate the "TAP Gap" and begin to once again connect maximum TAP awards with the proposals to increase the tuition costs at SUNY and CUNY.
- Stop the annual increases in public college tuition.
- Significantly increase state support for community colleges in both SUNY and CUNY.
- Increase state support for opportunity programs.

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