



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 20

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, The New Deal for CUNY (S.4461-A/A.5843-A), which is intended to reestablish the City University of New York as an engine for social and economic mobility by waiving all tuition and creating certain staff-to-student ratios in order to increase student success.

By Council Members Brannan, Dinowitz, Mealy, Restler, Farías, Marte, Avilés, Joseph, Louis, Williams, Brewer, Narcisse, Feliz, Menin, Nurse, Ossé, Powers, Riley, Ung, Cabán, Hanif, Hudson, Sanchez, Abreu, Rivera, Gutiérrez, Krishnan, Barron, De La Rosa, Velázquez, Won, Bottcher, Ayala, Lee, Holden, Stevens, Hanks and Gennaro

Whereas, The City University of New York (“CUNY” or “University”) was established in 1961 through legislation that united seven existing municipal colleges and a graduate school into a formally integrated citywide system of public higher education; and

Whereas, Currently, CUNY is the largest urban public university in the United States (U.S.) serving more than 275,000 degree and non-degree seeking students, including over 228,000 adult and continuing education course registrations across New York City (“NYC” or “City”); and

Whereas, While only 61 years old, the University’s history dates back to 1847, when the Free Academy, now the City College of New York, was founded as the first publicly-financed institution of higher education in NYC; and

Whereas, Founded on the principles on which the Free Academy was established, CUNY’s mission today remains the same: to uphold a commitment to academic excellence while providing equal access and opportunity for education “as a vehicle for the upward mobility of the disadvantaged in the [city]”; and

Whereas, CUNY schools also instituted a merit-based tuition-free policy that lasted until 1970, when the University eliminated all tuition charges and implemented an open admissions policy, guaranteeing all NYC

public high school graduates admission to one of its colleges; and

Whereas, CUNY was only able to operate tuition-free until the financial crisis of 1976, when New York State (“NYS” or “State”) took over the administration of CUNY, to help the City avoid bankruptcy; and

Whereas, Since then, the State’s chronic underinvestment in the University has forced CUNY to cut academic offerings, reduce counseling and inhabit dilapidated buildings, all while increasing tuition; and

Whereas, The actual cost of attending CUNY, which includes, but is not limited to, the cost of transportation, textbooks and student fees, combined with the high cost of living in NYC, means that many current students, who largely come from low- and modest-income families, would not have the opportunity to earn a college degree if it were not for state and federal financial aid; and

Whereas, While funding provided through the NYS Tuition Assistance Program (“TAP”) as well as various public and private scholarships can help to close the opportunity gap by subsidizing tuition, these programs have not been enough to fully counter the State’s austerity approach to funding public higher education; and

Whereas, CUNY is often the best option for a college education for poor and working class New Yorkers, for communities of color, for new immigrants and for the urban middle class, yet students are confronted with larger and larger classes increasingly taught by underpaid adjuncts, limited access to academic advisors and a single mental health counselor for every 2,700 full-time students; and

Whereas, The CUNY New Deal (S.4461-A/A.5843-A), sponsored by State Senator Andrew Gouardes and State Assembly Member Reyes, respectively, would waive all tuition and create certain staff-to-student ratios, including a ratio of one clinical health counselor per 1,000 students, 65 full-time faculty members per 1,000 students by academic year 2026, and one academic advisor per 600 students by academic year 2025, in order to increase student success; and

Whereas, The CUNY New Deal presents a comprehensive approach to improving the student experience at CUNY, providing the appropriate academic, social and emotional support students need to stay on

track to graduate and providing the resources needed to renovate CUNY campuses while reducing the need for students to seek outside income to cover tuition and other expenses; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, The New Deal for CUNY (S.4461-A/A.5843-A), which is intended to reestablish the City University of New York as an engine for social and economic mobility by waiving all tuition and creating certain staff-to-student ratios in order to increase student success.

Session 12

AH

LS #5843

02/18/2022

Session 11

CGR

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