



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** Res 0676-2004, **Version:** \*

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### Res. No. 676

Resolution calling upon Governor George E. Pataki and the New York State Legislature to enact legislation that would waive tuition and fees at City University of New York institutions for New York City residents who are either disabled military veterans or the children, spouses or dependents of such veterans.

By Council Members Yassky, Addabbo, Avella, Brewer, Comrie, Dilan, Fidler, Gentile, Liu, Martinez, Monserrate, Nelson, Sanders, Weprin, Jackson, Recchia, Gonzalez, Gerson and Oddo

Whereas, The City University of New York (CUNY) is the largest municipal university system in the United States and the third largest public university system in terms of student numbers in the country; and

Whereas, CUNY traces its roots to The Free Academy, which was established in 1847 with the mission and purpose to educate “the whole people;” and

Whereas, In furtherance of this educational mission, CUNY students who were also New York City residents were the beneficiaries of a tuition free policy until 1976, when the policy was changed and students were required to pay tuition for the first time; and

Whereas, Since tuition was implemented in 1976, tuition costs at CUNY have continued to increase, and today full-time undergraduate students who are New York City residents are required to pay \$2,800 a year in tuition to attend a community college and \$4,000 a year to attend a senior college; and

Whereas, The United States Department of Education reported in 2003 that New York State's senior and community public colleges were the 15<sup>th</sup> and sixth most expensive in the nation, respectively; and

Whereas, Historically, individual educational advancement has been one of the key steps towards upward economic mobility; and

Whereas, In 2003, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs awarded approximately \$60.5 million in funding to veterans residing in New York State, with approximately seventy-five percent of these awards furnished to veterans with service-connected disabilities; and

Whereas, Approximately \$34 million of this funding consisted of regular, monthly expenditures to veterans who, according to a report issued by the New York State Division of Veterans’ Affairs, would otherwise be unable to live independently or without public assistance within their communities; and

Whereas, The New York State Higher Education Services Corporation, which currently awards college scholarships to Persian Gulf and Vietnam veterans, limits such scholarships to \$1,000 per semester for full time study, \$500 per semester for part-time study and \$10,000 in the aggregate; and

Whereas, The New York State Higher Education Services Corporation also administers the Awards for Children of Veterans Program, which provides a \$450 annual award to college students whose parent or parents served in the United States military during specified periods of war or national emergency and, as a result of such service, died or suffered a certain disability, is classified as missing in action or was a prisoner of war; and

Whereas, The New York State Higher Education Services Corporation also administers the Military Service Recognition Scholarship, which offers financial aid to children, spouses and dependents of members of the armed forces who, while New York State residents, die or become severely or permanently disabled while engaged in or training for hostilities, but limits eligibility to those persons who became veterans on or after August 2, 1990; and

Whereas, The intent of the tuition assistance programs offered to military veterans by the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation, while laudable, grants financial assistance that is dwarfed by the expenditures necessary to obtain a college degree in New York; and

Whereas, The State of California, home to more than 2.6 million military veterans, administers an extensive statewide educational assistance program for the dependent child, spouse or unmarried surviving spouse of a disabled or deceased veteran, wherein such persons may apply for and receive a waiver of tuition and fees at any campus of the California State University System, University of California or a California Community College; and

Whereas, Disabled military veterans, by virtue of the sacrifice made on behalf of the United States, should be permitted to pursue meaningful educational opportunities at institutions of higher learning within the City University of New York system without concern for the cost of tuition and fees; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon Governor George E. Pataki and the New York State Legislature to enact legislation that would waive tuition and fees at City University of New York institutions for New York City residents who are either disabled military veterans or the children, spouses or dependents of such veterans.

LS #1407  
8/18/2004  
JE