



May 28, 2019

Memorandum of Opposition

A. 7862 (Rozic)/ S.5797 (Stavisky)

The Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU) strongly opposes A.7862/ S.5797 which would allow SUNY to lower tuition rates for out-of-state students. New York already offers one of the most heavily subsidized, and lowest, non-resident tuitions of any public university system in the country.¹

CICU represents more than 100 private, not-for-profit colleges and universities in New York State who educate almost 500,000 students annually. Recent policy changes at the state level, including the introduction of free tuition at SUNY and CUNY for income eligible families, present significant recruitment challenges for many private, not-for-profit colleges who draw upon the pool of New York students. These same schools also recruit from bordering states. By increasing the subsidy for out-of-state students to entice them to New York's public colleges, this legislation creates yet another barrier to recruitment at New York's private colleges. Private colleges are major economic drivers throughout the state, responsible for \$88.8 billion in economic activity and more than 400,000 jobs, but if they are to remain so, caution must be taken not to adopt policies that promote an increasingly unlevel playing field.

Efforts to bolster enrollment at SUNY campuses should not come at the expense of taxpayers or private colleges that do not have the advantage of taxpayer subsidies to offer to out-of-state students. Between fall 2016 and fall 2017, first time, full time freshmen enrollment rose by six percent at SUNY and by nine percent at CUNY, while declining by five percent at New York's private, not-for-profit colleges that primarily serve New York students.² A.7862/ S.5797 would lead to further declines at these private colleges. To the extent that certain SUNY schools are experiencing enrollment challenges, these schools, like their private sector counterparts, can reduce capacity or create new programs with higher demand. Neither alternative would involve increasing taxpayer subsidies for out-of-state students.

One way that legislators can help to boost enrollment at the State's public and private college campuses is to increase financial aid through the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). This directly assists New Yorkers rather than out-of-state students and helps to maintain a balanced higher education ecosystem where New York college bound students are incentivized to remain in the state at the college that best meets their needs.

¹ <https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/2018-19-state-tuition-and-fees-public-four-year-institutions-state-and-five-year-percentage>

² Degree-credit enrollment at four-year SUNY, CUNY, and private, not-for-profit institutions