

Statement by Elsa M. Magee
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To the
New York State Senate Finance Committee
and
New York State Assembly Ways and Means Committee

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Chairwoman Young, Chairman Farrell, Chairman LaValle, Chairwoman Glick, and members of the Senate and Assembly, thank you for the opportunity to speak today about the Governor's 2017-18 Executive Budget recommendations that impact the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC). I am Elsa Magee, Executive Vice President and Acting President of HESC.

HESC administers New York State's generous Tuition Assistance Program and more than 20 other student financial aid and college access programs that help to ease college costs for New York State residents. Collectively, these programs provide over \$1 billion in financial aid awards to support the college costs of more than 370,000 students at public and private colleges. This includes roughly \$650 million for students attending public colleges and over \$300 million for students attending a private college.

Governor Cuomo's 2017-18 Executive Budget continues full support for all existing State grant and scholarship programs, reintroduces the DREAM Act, and proposes bold new actions to further alleviate financial barriers to obtaining a college degree in New York State.

The Executive Budget includes the Excelsior Scholarship to make college tuition-free for New York's middle-class families at all SUNY and CUNY two- and four-year colleges. This proposal enables students from households with

incomes of up to \$125,000 to attend a public college tuition free – ensuring that all New York State students have access to a quality education and the skills needed to succeed in today’s global economy. To reduce the total cost of earning a degree, recipients must be on track to complete their degrees in two years, for those pursuing associate degrees, or four years, for those pursuing their baccalaureate. This program effectively leverages our very generous Tuition Assistance Program, coupled with other aid sources, to cover the tuition for over 200,000 students.

To stem the surging rise in tuition costs, the Governor has also proposed actions to make all colleges in New York State accountable for the cost of getting a degree at their institutions. Beginning in 2018-19, only colleges that maintain annual tuition rate increases below \$500 or the 3-year average of the Higher Education Price Index, whichever is greater, would be eligible to participate in TAP. Colleges whose annual tuition increase exceeds the threshold would be ineligible to receive TAP for students newly entering their campuses. No existing students would be impacted by this proposal.

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The Governor has been a champion for students seeking a college education every year since taking office, increasing State support for higher education by \$1 billion since 2012. Under his leadership, New York has implemented an unprecedented number of new student financial aid programs and initiatives,

including: the STEM Incentive Program; the NYS Get On Your Feet Loan Forgiveness Program; the Masters-in-Education Teacher Incentive Scholarship; and the New York State Standard Financial Aid Award Letter. His recommendations for higher education programs continue to pave a path to an affordable and high quality college education.

The 2017-18 Executive Budget enables HESC to continue administering an array of programs and services that support the attainment of a college degree for all New York State students. On behalf of Governor Cuomo, HESC is pleased to play a vital role in providing New York State's students with a gateway to a successful college career.

Thank you and I would be glad to answer any questions you may have.