

Good morning Members of the Assembly and the Senate. My name is Mac-Olivier Lalanne. I'm currently a sophomore in SUNY Plattsburgh and I am from Brooklyn, NY. I am here to testify the need of funding for our college and universities on behalf of students like myself attending college or preparing to attend college. First, I want to say thank you for your efforts to invest your time, money, and energy to help us students get into college and thank you for allowing me to testify. Next I would like to say that although we appreciate the effort, we all believe that more can be done too.

Every year, colleges and universities tend to increase its tuition and its fees. Due to the increase, students tend to face the tough decisions of either continue on their education, apply and get a private loan to pay the increase despite the consequences in hopes of getting an education, get a job to pay for it, serve in the army via ROTC, or leave the school and the list goes on. During my time as a student, I have physically witnessed times departments have come over and talked about their budget and why it is important to increase the fees(as I was a senator for Student Association)and students were outraged, especially when the recreation fee was approved to be mandatory and even blamed the Student Association for it despite the fact that we couldn't do anything about it.

One thing I believe is worth considering is expanding the excelsior scholarship and TAP to make it more affordable regardless to where the student goes as someone who goes to a CUNY benefits from the scholarship more than a student who goes to a SUNY. Another thing to consider is investing on a plan that would ensure students to pay off financial holds on their accounts as I too have seen many students who want to apply to classes next semester but can't do so because they can't afford the hold that was placed on their account, thus penalizing and

exploiting students to pay the hold or risk not going to class next semester which is not fair for those who are suffering from financial ruin or hardships. Another thing you all should consider is granting aid to colleges and universities when it comes to diversity and inclusion as I feel that yes anyone can go to college after high school, there is a lack of diverse people and cultures which depending on the location of the college, there is little to no resources or a voice for the misrepresented people. During my times as a college student, I have heard stories and incidents that students like me have faced which to summarize it all up, college administration didn't quite do a good job on addressing issues concerning racial issues or that involved misrepresented people. I know that my school isn't the only one as many schools around New York State also suffers the same or similar issue. A year prior to me going to SUNY Plattsburgh, a snapchat incident happened that involved a student posting a caption that was sensitive to the black community in SUNY Plattsburgh. As a result of the backlash from the incident, a portion of the administrative positions was let go, and even the president was let go (but he retired which the incident was a factor). The incident also revitalized the school's administration as it added a director for equity, diversity, and inclusion, and created a community office and room in the college center. Another thing to consider is granting more aid and resources for college food pantries as students tend to rely on the pantry for food in times when they can't afford food or when they don't have enough in their meal plan. One last thing to consider is to grant more aid and resources to schools when it comes to civil and voter participation as yes colleges can help grant students those services, I don't quite see enough especially for this generation.

Thank you for allowing me and other people to testify and I hope this legislative session goes well for you all.