

Statement by Dr. Guillermo Linares
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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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Good afternoon, Chairs Krueger, Weinstein, Stavisky and Fahy, and all my former colleagues in the Senate and Assembly. I am Dr. Guillermo Linares, President of HESC, and I thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about the 2023-24 Executive Budget recommendations for HESC.

New York State has a history of generously supporting students seeking post-secondary educational opportunities. In 2021-22, which represents the last completed academic year, more than \$900 million dollars in HESC-administered financial aid was awarded to support the post-secondary educational goals of roughly 300,000 college-going students. This represents one quarter of the 1.1 million students who attended a New York State higher education institution.

Governor Hochul's 2023-24 Executive Budget continues the State's commitment to putting postsecondary education within reach of every student seeking to obtain a college credential by maintaining critical investments in higher education programs that expand access to a high quality, affordable higher education here in New York State. With the \$836 million dollars, or 12.6 percent, annual increase in support for higher education advanced in her FY 2024 Executive Budget, we can secure and strengthen New York as a national leader in expanding access to a quality, affordable college education.

Continuing Support for Historic Expansion of TAP

In 2023-24, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of our State's flagship program, TAP. Over the course of the past 50 years, TAP has provided nearly \$30 billion dollars to help more than 6 million New Yorkers who pursued a college education in our great State.

Last year, Governor Hochul advanced changes to TAP in recognition of the fact that for many students, full-time higher education is not viable with other challenges like work or families. With support from the Legislature, New York also implemented significant programmatic changes recognizing that many students need affordable access to effective training courses to build or improve their work skills.

The 2023-24 Executive Budget continues full support of the historic expansion of TAP that was implemented last year to support part-time students in both degree-seeking programs and non-degree training programs at our community colleges. These changes have already resulted in the awarding of financial aid support to thousands of part-time students enrolled for the fall 2022 academic term alone.

The Governor's 2023-24 Budget recommendations also propose continued TAP support to incarcerated New Yorkers who are pursuing postsecondary degrees or credentials—continuing the State's restoration of a benefit that has been withheld to this community of students since 1995. Continued support in the reversal of this ban expands educational opportunities to those seeking to learn while in our State's correctional

facilities and helps incarcerated individuals obtain critical job skills that will be an immediate benefit upon their release.

Closing

In closing, this year's Executive Budget continues to implement the Governor's vision to transform the State's public higher education system to become the best and most equitable statewide system of higher education in the country. It advances actions to expand enrollment and access to colleges across the State and build the strength of our world-class public university systems.

A higher education remains the engine for social and economic mobility. The more than two dozen HESC-administered grant, scholarship and loan forgiveness programs enable students to reach their higher education goals and attain the economic and social benefits that accompany a college degree or postsecondary credential.

The Governor has outlined her higher education goals related to increasing enrollment and completion rates, preparing students for in-demand jobs, and ensuring a world-class student experience at our public universities. She is committed to reimagining higher education to provide students every possible opportunity to put them at the greatest competitive advantage.

Under her leadership, New York continues to lead the nation in expanding access to a quality and affordable college education, and HESC is privileged to help carry out her vision for all New Yorkers and to work toward our shared goal to help New York's students realize their dream of a higher education.

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