

# STATE OF NEW YORK

890

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

## IN ASSEMBLY

(Prefiled)

January 8, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. FORREST, MITAYNES, ALVAREZ, BICHOTTE HERMELYN, GALLAGHER, SHRESTHA, TAPIA, MAMDANI, GONZALEZ-ROJAS, SIMON, DAVILA -- read once and referred to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the education law and the state finance law, in relation to providing free tuition to students who attend the state university of New York

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as "new deal for  
2 SUNY: the New York state higher education equality act".

3 § 2. Paragraph h of subdivision 2 of section 355 of the education law  
4 is amended by adding a new subparagraph 1-a to read as follows:

5 (1-a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, rule or regulation  
6 to the contrary, the trustees shall implement a program to permit any  
7 student who has been admitted to a state-operated institution of the  
8 state university of New York to attend without the payment of tuition  
9 and fees if such student fulfills the requirements of such program  
10 pursuant to the provisions of this subparagraph.

11 (i) The trustees shall provide an application process and administer  
12 the program which shall be available to any student eligible for resi-  
13 dent tuition rates, who is enrolled in credit-bearing academic course-  
14 work and is on track to graduate.

15 (ii) Any student not successfully completing credit-bearing academic  
16 coursework in a semester shall still be eligible to receive all other  
17 grants, awards, and scholarships for which they qualify but shall not be  
18 eligible for the tuition and student fee waiver described herein.

19 (iii) Students shall be eligible to receive a one semester exemption  
20 from the requirement to complete credit-bearing academic coursework for  
21 such tuition waiver as promulgated by the trustees. Such exemption shall

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets  
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 not preclude any student from exercising their right to appeal pursuant  
2 to higher education services corporation policy.

3 (iv) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, rule or regulation to  
4 the contrary subject to amounts made available by appropriation,  
5 commencing in the academic year next succeeding the effective date of  
6 this subdivision, and every academic year thereafter, the state univer-  
7 sity shall be entitled to annually receive one hundred percent  
8 reimbursement for the annual cost of tuition and student fees for each  
9 matriculated undergraduate student at a state university senior college  
10 and community college who is enrolled in credit-bearing academic course-  
11 work and is on track to graduate from the fund established pursuant to  
12 section ninety-seven-aaaa of the state finance law.

13 § 3. Section 667 of the education law is amended by adding a new  
14 subdivision 1-a to read as follows:

15 1-a. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, rule or regulation to  
16 the contrary, commencing in the academic year next succeeding the effec-  
17 tive date of this subdivision, and every academic year thereafter, all  
18 funding appropriated for tuition assistance program awards pursuant to  
19 this section shall be deposited into the fund specified in section nine-  
20 ty-seven-aaaa of the state finance law.

21 § 4. Section 669-h of the education law is amended by adding a new  
22 subdivision 7 to read as follows:

23 7. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, rule or regulation to  
24 the contrary, commencing in the academic year next succeeding the effec-  
25 tive date of this subdivision, and every academic year thereafter, all  
26 funding appropriated for the excelsior scholarship pursuant to this  
27 section shall be deposited into the fund specified in section ninety-  
28 seven-aaaa of the state finance law.

29 § 5. Subdivision 1 of section 6304 of the education law is amended by  
30 adding a new paragraph e to read as follows:

31 e. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, rule or regulation to  
32 the contrary, the trustees, sponsors, or other governing body of a  
33 community college shall implement a program to permit any student who  
34 has been admitted to a state-operated institution of the state universi-  
35 ty to attend without the payment of tuition and fees if such student  
36 fulfills the requirements of such program pursuant to the provisions of  
37 this paragraph.

38 (i) The trustees shall provide an application process and administer  
39 the program which shall be available to any student eligible for resi-  
40 dent tuition rates, who is enrolled in credit-bearing academic course-  
41 work and is on track to graduate.

42 (ii) Any student not successfully completing credit-bearing academic  
43 coursework in a semester shall still be eligible to receive all other  
44 grants, awards, and scholarships for which they qualify but shall not be  
45 eligible for the tuition and student fee waiver described herein.

46 (iii) Students shall be eligible to receive a one semester exemption  
47 from the requirement to complete credit-bearing academic coursework for  
48 such tuition waiver as promulgated by the trustees. Such exemption shall  
49 not preclude any student from exercising their right to appeal pursuant  
50 to higher education services corporation policy.

51 § 6. Subdivision 1 of section 6304 of the education law is amended by  
52 adding a new paragraph a-1 to read as follows:

53 a-1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, rule or regulation to  
54 the contrary, state financial aid shall be increased above the one-third  
55 amount of operating costs set forth in paragraph a of this subdivision  
56 by an amount which is equal to the cost of tuition awarded to students

1 who apply and qualify for the program set forth in paragraph e of this  
2 subdivision and such aid shall be deposited into the fund specified in  
3 section ninety-seven-aaaa of the state finance law.

4 § 7. The state finance law is amended by adding a new section 97-aaaa  
5 to read as follows:

6 § 97-aaaa. State university tuition fund. 1. There is hereby estab-  
7 lished in the joint custody of the state comptroller and the commission-  
8 er of taxation and finance a fund to be known as the state university  
9 tuition fund.

10 2. The fund shall consist of moneys received by the state pursuant to  
11 subparagraph one-a of paragraph h of subdivision two of section three  
12 hundred fifty-five of the education law, moneys donated or given to the  
13 state, and all other moneys appropriated, credited or transferred there-  
14 to from any other fund or source.

15 3. Moneys of the fund shall be made available to the commissioner of  
16 education to be distributed to the state university of New York and  
17 shall be deposited with the state university no later than thirty days  
18 after the start of the semester. The state university shall receive an  
19 amount equal to the full cost of in-state undergraduate tuition and  
20 student fees for each qualifying, matriculated student who successfully  
21 completes credit-bearing academic coursework and is on track to graduate  
22 from the state university.

23 4. The full cost of tuition shall not include any additional funds the  
24 student may receive from any other New York state or federal grant,  
25 award, or scholarship program.

26 5. The deposit of these funds shall be utilized as first dollar awards  
27 to the students at the state university.

28 § 8. This act shall take effect immediately.