

1 BEFORE THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE
2 STANDING COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

3 PUBLIC HEARING:

4 FUNDING OUR PUBLIC COLLEGES
5 -----

6
7 Senate Hearing Room
8 250 Broadway, 19th Floor
9 New York, New York

10 Date: December 16, 2019
11 Time: 11:30 a.m.

12 PRESIDING:

13 Senator Toby Ann Stavisky
14 Chair

15 PRESENT:

16 Senator Robert J. Jackson
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1 SENATOR STAVISKY: It is now 11:30, and we
2 are going to start our hearing.

3 Good morning.

4 First, let me thank you for coming today, and
5 let me welcome you to the Senate Standing Committee
6 on Higher Education's hearing being held in the
7 New York State Senate Hearing Room at 250 Broadway
8 in Manhattan.

9 Today is December 16, 2019, and the time is
10 11:30 a.m.

11 I would like to start the hearing by thanking
12 the folks from the Senate staff, Mike Swanson, from
13 the Senate Finance Committee, and, Frankie Schwartz
14 from the New York State Senate Operations Committee,
15 for assistance in the preparation of for this
16 hearing; as well as Mike Favilla, my chief --
17 Michael Favilla, my chief of staff; Saul Chapnick
18 and Chelsea Hill from my office.

19 The purpose of the hearing today is to
20 discuss capital funding for higher education, and
21 the need for a five-year capital plan for both SUNY
22 and CUNY, that -- a plan that takes into account the
23 Climate, Leadership, and Community Protection Act,
24 "CLCPA," as it's known, and the goals that they have
25 set for themselves.

1 We will also discuss the capital needs in the
2 private sector as well.

3 The SUNY state-operated campuses represent
4 about 40 percent of the state's buildings, and, of
5 that, about 40 percent of those buildings are more
6 than 50 years old.

7 Secondly, I want to point out, I'm sure we
8 all know that -- know this, but we have not had a
9 five-year capital plan since 2008.

10 The 2019 approved budget did include
11 \$834 million in critical maintenance, but critical
12 maintenance does not put a shovel in the ground and
13 help in the construction of new buildings,
14 certainly, more climate-efficient new buildings.

15 And, lastly, the HECap matching grant program
16 for the private colleges was allocated \$30 million
17 in the 2019-2020 budget. But, unfortunately, this
18 3-to-1 match takes a long time to process.

19 I look forward to hearing the testimony.

20 We have copies for the members for -- of the
21 Committee, as well as having it available online, so
22 that I hope everyone will adhere to the time
23 constraints.

24 And, lastly, because of the potential of
25 inclement weather, I would like -- and people have

1 to return to Albany, as well as other parts of the
2 state, I would like to end the hearing no later than
3 3 p.m.

4 And we'll begin with our first panel of
5 speakers.

6 Robert...?

7 ROBERT M. HAELEN: Haelen.

8 SENATOR STAVISKY: Is he -- oh, there.

9 Robert Megna, senior vice chancellor, chief
10 operating officer, of SUNY;

11 Robert Haelen, senior vice chancellor for
12 capital facilities, and general manager of the SUNY
13 Construction Fund;

14 And, Karren Bee-Donohoe, associate
15 vice chancellor for capital facilities.

16 And before we begin, I would like to welcome
17 the Chancellor, congratulate her on her election,
18 And welcome, Merryl Tisch, who has a long and
19 illustrious record of service to the community.

20 And we certainly appreciate all of her
21 contributions, not for the past, really, but what's
22 going to happen in the future.

23 ROBERT M. HAELEN: Okay, good morning.

24 SENATOR STAVISKY: Good morning.

25 ROBERT M. HAELEN: And thank you for inviting

1 us to provide testimony today on SUNY's capital
2 operations and our ongoing plans for meeting
3 ever-changing academic needs, as well as our work to
4 make SUNY the leader when it comes to clean energy,
5 energy efficiency, and innovative building.

6 I am Robert Haelen, general manager of the
7 State University Construction Fund, and senior
8 vice chancellor for the Office of Capital Facilities
9 for the State University of New York.

10 I am joined here today with
11 Karren Bee-Donohoe, the associate vice chancellor
12 for capital facilities.

13 On behalf of Chancellor Kristina Johnson,
14 I would like to thank you, Chairperson Stavisky, for
15 holding this hearing.

16 I know that the Chancellor looks forward to
17 discussing SUNY's state fiscal-year '20-'21 agenda
18 with you and your colleagues soon.

19 I would also like to acknowledge and thank
20 our Chairman, Merryl Tisch, and our entire SUNY
21 Board of Trustees, for their leadership and support,
22 along with the great work of our executive
23 leadership team and the presidents across all
24 64 SUNY's colleges and campuses.

25 In fact, much of our testimony today, which

1 will be in the form of a visual presentation, will
2 highlight the innovative ways that the SUNY campuses
3 are wisely investing capital dollars provided by
4 Governor Cuomo and the Legislature to improve
5 infrastructure and modernize buildings as we educate
6 New York's future workforce.

7 Before I begin, I'd like to share some key
8 information about SUNY, our operations, and our
9 students that I think you will find interesting
10 (indiscernible) which also underscores the
11 importance of what we do.

12 SUNY serves 1.4 million students annually
13 across 64 colleges and campuses.

14 As previously noted, SUNY operates 40 percent
15 of the state's building assets, and many of our
16 campuses top annual social-mobility indices because
17 we are able to provide the physical space to help
18 these students excel while they are with us and into
19 the careers after they graduate.

20 Our present --

21 SENATOR STAVISKY: Would it help if the
22 lights-- can people see the -- is there a problem?

23 ROBERT M. HAELEN: No.

24 SENATOR STAVISKY: No?

25 Okay. I'm sorry.

1 (Slideshow begins.)

2 ROBERT M. HAELEN: Our presentation today
3 will cover the following areas:

4 An overview of New York State capital
5 breakdown, including the amount allocated to higher
6 education;

7 The SUNY footprint and asset life-cycle
8 modeling;

9 Transformational investments;

10 Campus investments and impacts;

11 And climate and clean-energy leadership.

12 We will not go through every slide with you
13 in the presentation, but we wanted to include
14 pictures and examples of much of the work happening
15 on our campuses.

16 You'll find this here as an appendix.

17 To begin, as you may know, the \$15 billion
18 capital fund is 7 percent of the state fiscal-year
19 '19-'20 spending plan.

20 Higher education, including SUNY, CUNY, and
21 the private colleges, benefit from about 10 percent
22 of the total of \$15 billion.

23 SUNY wisely invests its capital funds, with
24 over 80 percent addressing existing facility
25 critical maintenance needs. This includes

1 investment in building exteriors and building
2 systems which also helps improve energy efficiency.

3 The current annual spending is approximately
4 \$635 million.

5 And I know that Chancellor Johnson plans to
6 meet with you soon to discuss the '20-'21 needs.

7 We are appreciative of the investments that
8 Governor Cuomo and the Legislature have made, and,
9 as you know, SUNY's footprint is expansive.

10 There are over 2900 buildings and
11 100 million -- and 110 million square feet of space
12 to maintain. Our average age is 49 years old.

13 It is important to note that these numbers
14 also include the community colleges.

15 To quantify the best strategies for our
16 investment, SUNY has a robust asset life-cycle
17 database of over 42,000 components which identify
18 when assets come due for renewal, and it also tracks
19 the "FCI," or, facility condition index, for each
20 building, for each campus, and for the entire
21 system.

22 The average FCI is currently 12.7 percent,
23 which is well above the ideal industry standard of
24 5 percent, with more than half of the state-operated
25 campuses above 10 percent.

1 Along with the physical condition, it is
2 important to take into account the campus
3 programmatic needs, enrollment trends, and
4 sustainability opportunities.

5 This project at the University at Albany is
6 an example of a total-gut re -- renovation that will
7 provide a modern learning environment for the
8 growing education and math departments, and will
9 also achieve energy goals.

10 Aligning-- wherever possible, we align the
11 needs of our aging assets with supporting growing
12 programs.

13 This chart shows how programmatic headcounts
14 change over time with significant increases in the
15 STEM field. This is representative by the top four
16 bars.

17 Two areas making a comeback are also liberal
18 arts and education, which are typically cyclical.

19 SUNY capital projects are often
20 transformational.

21 We use new technologies, and have the
22 potential, due to our size and representation across
23 the state, to help shift markets.

24 As an example, the new School of Pharmacy at
25 Binghamton University, which was recently built in

1 Johnson City, a small depressed village across the
2 river from the Binghamton Campus, is creating a
3 medical corridor near the hospital.

4 An old manufacturing facility in the same
5 area is being repurposed into the School of Nursing.

6 These two projects have stimulated private
7 investment to develop housing in the area and are
8 helping to revitalize the community.

9 We have always designed projects to maximum
10 energy savings, but this chart shows we still have a
11 significant amount of fossil fuels being used,
12 primarily, natural gas and steam supplied by others,
13 but also produced by natural gas.

14 In 2007, the SUNY board passed a resolution,
15 requiring all new buildings and major renovations to
16 be designed LEED silver or better.

17 We have always had a history of building to
18 beyond building code with efficient systems and
19 well-insulated exteriors.

20 Some examples of energy-savings elements are
21 listed on this slide, which are typical insulated
22 windows and improved envelopes, geothermal wells,
23 high-efficiency chillers, condensing boilers,
24 LED lighting, and solar vol -- photovoltaic systems.

25 As a result of this hard work we have been

1 doing, we have increased our square footage by
2 28 percent, yet only increased our energy usage by
3 2 percent, since 2005.

4 As you know, there has been numerous
5 executive orders prior to the creation of the CLCPA
6 that have helped to influence the progress we've
7 made.

8 Three boxes on this chart are internal
9 SUNY-specific initiatives, while the others are
10 executive and legislative initiatives.

11 Capital infrastructure, of course, extends
12 well beyond our buildings. It also covers our
13 energy grid, our transportation infrastructure, and
14 much more.

15 I would like to turn it over to Karren.

16 KARREN BEE-DONOHUE: Thank you, Bob.

17 As Bob mentioned, the fund and campuses have
18 been going well beyond the requirements of energy
19 code for years, even as the code has increased in
20 rigor.

21 Yet as the chart showed, significant fossil
22 fuels are still being used, which we will continue
23 to work to reduce, through major changes in how we
24 approach buildings and prioritize investments.

25 Working throughout 2018, with the release in

1 early 2019, SUNY collaborated with NYPA, NYSERDA,
2 DPS, and LIPA to develop a clean-energy road map for
3 SUNY with six major goals: Environmental
4 sustainability, clean-energy template, a network of
5 community resilience, net-zero buildings, existing
6 building retrofits, and workforce development.

7 I'll go into each of these briefly.

8 The first goal is for SUNY's grid-sourced
9 electricity to be 100 percent from renewable
10 sources.

11 The first step to this is underway, with
12 development of a consortium of both private and
13 public universities, to form the New York Higher
14 Education Large-Scale Renewable Energy Consortium.

15 Individual campuses do not have a large
16 enough load to contract with the developer for an
17 entire large-scale renewable-energy project.

18 But when the campuses join together, they can
19 purchase the output of the entire project, achieving
20 a better price.

21 This gives the developer a set income stream
22 for the life of the contract, opening access to
23 financing for the developers.

24 Through this project, SUNY is incentivizing
25 development of new renewable projects while also

1 stabilizing the cost of electricity for the
2 campuses.

3 The consortium has hired a consultant, and is
4 nearing the release of the RFP for this first
5 tranche of campuses.

6 Subsequent RFPs will be released to move SUNY
7 to meet this first goal.

8 The second goal is to have all campuses
9 reduce their greenhouse emissions by 40 percent from
10 the 1990 levels.

11 As a system, the State-operated campuses had
12 been moving toward the previous goal of 30 by 20.
13 And as a system, SUNY was at 24.5 percent reduction
14 as of 2017.

15 With the work done in 2018, the preliminary
16 numbers show SUNY at 39.2 percent reduction, very
17 close to the CLCPA goal of 40 by 30.

18 This chart also shows that SUNY is coming
19 close to meeting the Paris Accord goals of
20 28 percent by 2025.

21 The third goal is to have all campuses assess
22 the potential to develop a campus microgrid for all
23 or part of the campus to help with resiliency, with
24 a few ideal campus candidates to be identified by
25 the end of 2020, and a template for planning to be

1 developed by 2021.

2 To address Goal 4, all SUNY facilities
3 commencing design in 2019, and beyond, are to be
4 designed to net-zero carbon emissions.

5 Toward this goal, the Construction Fund has
6 issued Designed Directive 1B-2, and is working with
7 the New Buildings Institute, NYSERDA, and A10, an
8 architectural consultant with clean-energy
9 experience, to enhance and clarify the directive.

10 The fifth goal is targeted to the existing
11 building stock, looking to accomplish deep-energy
12 retrofits on all existing buildings.

13 The 1B-2 building directive also addresses
14 both major and partial renovations of existing
15 buildings, recognizing that a true deep-energy
16 retrofit will address a building envelope, creating
17 an envelope with minimal thermal transfer for both
18 heat and cold, coupled with a replacement and
19 reduction of the HVAC equipment, and topped off by
20 instituting additional energy-efficiency measures.

21 The last of the six goals is to develop a
22 clean-energy workforce, both for the clean-energy
23 industry and internally at the SUNY campuses, to
24 maintain and manage the campus facilities and
25 buildings of the future.

1 The clean-energy economy needs workers with a
2 technology-based education that can deal with the
3 more complex buildings Bob described.

4 We are working toward both of these goals
5 with NYSERDA on development of clean-energy
6 curriculum through a grant program, and with NYPA on
7 educating our workforce on the use of the New York
8 Energy Manager.

9 And with that, I'll turn it back over to Bob.

10 ROBERT M. HAELEN: As mentioned earlier, we
11 have included in the slide deck many examples of the
12 work we are -- we have been doing throughout SUNY
13 for your review today, or later at your convenience.

14 It would be impossible to share in this
15 testimony all of the innovation, hard work, and
16 visionary ideas coming out of our campuses, or all
17 of the challenge we -- challenges we have in the
18 years ahead.

19 We are thankful you have convened this
20 hearing, and that you will be hearing from campus
21 leaders, students, and advocates from both the
22 private and public sector.

23 It is a privilege to come here before you,
24 and we would be happy to answer any questions.

25

1 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

2 Be -- I have a couple of minor questions, but
3 before that, let me introduce my colleague and
4 longtime friend, Senator Robert J. Jackson.

5 SENATOR JACKSON: Well, Senator, let me thank
6 you for putting forward this hearing on a very
7 important subject area.

8 Obviously, someone that has been involved in
9 education for decades, and more specifically, in my
10 the first year on the New York State Senate, I had
11 the opportunity to sit and listen to testimony at
12 the joint budget hearings, and, listening to
13 individuals that are talking from all sides
14 regarding their needs, especially in SUNY and CUNY.

15 And it's clear to me that the infrastructure
16 of SUNY, and CUNY, needs lots of funding in order to
17 be in sync with what's going on in 2020, and beyond.

18 And, obviously, knowing that education is an
19 equalizer for all communities, I'm just so happy to
20 be a part of listening, and making recommendations,
21 and, hopefully, seeking the type of funding that is
22 needed in our system.

23 I've heard that from SUNY New Paltz
24 President, and others.

25 I just wish that some of the leaders in the

1 system would really say how they really feel about
2 the funding, instead of trying to be more
3 diplomatic, not to piss off certain individuals in
4 higher levels of government, because that's what's
5 really needed.

6 As you know, I'm not a homeowner, but I do
7 live in an apartment, in which needs to be painted
8 and the floors need to be done, and, in essence, it
9 needs a lot of tender loving care, in order to be
10 the type of apartment that I like and my family
11 likes.

12 And so I do understand about SUNY.

13 I went to SUNY New Paltz.

14 My wife went to SUNY New Paltz.

15 My daughter went to SUNY New Paltz.

16 Another daughter went to SUNY at Buffalo.

17 So -- and I've been on all of those campuses.

18 And I say to you that, besides operating
19 money, which is totally different, now we're dealing
20 with capital that deals with the major
21 infrastructures and technology that we need.

22 So, I appreciate listening to you.

23 I would love to talk to you off-mic about
24 your real needs and feelings about it.

25 But one of the questions, after we hear from

1 our Chair, I want to know: How much money are we
2 talking about, over what period of time, so that we
3 can get some sort of focus?

4 Because life is constantly -- you have to
5 constantly refocus about what you're doing, and how
6 you're doing it, and whether or not we have the
7 resources to do it.

8 And I thank you for coming in.

9 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

10 And I think we are talking -- including it in
11 a five-year capital plan, which is part of the --
12 I think part of the solution.

13 Before I ask you a couple of questions,
14 I must tell you -- I know Chancellor Johnson has
15 been very involved in this issue.

16 And, in fact, long before I scheduled the
17 hearings, during the session this year -- earlier
18 this year, she had -- she brought some folks from
19 the different campuses, from ESF, from Stony Brook,
20 and there was a presentation at the facility on
21 Washington -- opposite Washington Park, I guess
22 that's Washington Avenue, on the sustainability
23 issues.

24 And it was very, very enlightening to hear
25 about how, for example, they were treating wood to

1 make it last longer at the Syracuse campus, and so
2 on.

3 I have only one question, or two.

4 The consortium that you're talking about only
5 has a few colleges.

6 And I would love to see that increase,
7 because I think there -- the public -- the
8 partnership between the private sector and the
9 public sector is extremely important, because many
10 of those colleges are facing the same kinds of
11 problems that you're facing.

12 Do you have plans to increase that number?

13 KARREN BEE-DONOHUE: There are no plans at
14 the moment to increase the number of private
15 universities.

16 We did a lot of outreach. We had, initially,
17 about seven or eight that were very interested.
18 But, when it came time to sign on the line, a letter
19 of intent to participate, that went down to five.
20 And then, during this past year, we had another one
21 drop out.

22 They simply didn't have a person who could
23 continue to follow through with it, because this
24 takes a lot of work.

25 They've been working very hard on this.

1 SENATOR STAVISKY: And the second part of the
2 question:

3 You have this part -- this consortium with
4 the private colleges.

5 What about the business community, so that we
6 can effect a revenue stream to pay for some of these
7 things?

8 KARREN BEE-DONOHUE: Yeah, we have not
9 engaged the business community on this particular
10 piece, but this is only the first step, and is only
11 a piece of the SUNY campuses.

12 So once we do this first one, we could look
13 at potential for future ones.

14 SENATOR STAVISKY: Because I love the idea of
15 the business community working together with the
16 higher-education community, 'cause, to me, that
17 creates jobs and revenue and all good things.

18 Senator Jackson, did have you a question?

19 SENATOR JACKSON: Sure.

20 So I wanted to get back to the question that
21 I posed in my introduction, and, obviously, that was
22 only a minute or two ago.

23 So, to give you an opportunity to respond to,
24 I want to know, from the perspective of, from SUNY,
25 the Construction Fund, and from the Chancellor's

1 office, you know, and with the Chair indicated
2 five-year capital plan:

3 So, how much are we talking about?

4 And, what schools are in most need compared
5 to some other projects?

6 And, you know, have you had -- do you have a
7 list of the various SUNY schools, and what their
8 needs are, in essence, to help formulate the
9 five-year capital needs, understanding the holistic
10 point of view, but then looking at the individual
11 campuses also?

12 So, that's my question to both of you.

13 ROBERT M. HAELEN: Sure.

14 All right. Thank you.

15 So the -- SUNY's capital budget was discussed
16 at the November board of trustees meeting, and also
17 at the December meeting.

18 And I'll just go through some of the key
19 points of that budget request.

20 It is a multiyear plan; it's a five-year
21 plan.

22 The first year for educational facilities:

23 We had asked for base critical maintenance of
24 \$650 million, which is up \$100 million from last
25 year.

1 We also asked for another \$200 million for
2 strategic needs, which could be for either new
3 construction or major renovations.

4 So that brings --

5 SENATOR JACKSON: That's facility, you said?

6 ROBERT M. HAELEN: Facility -- facility
7 needs.

8 SENATOR JACKSON: That's what I said.

9 Okay, thank you.

10 ROBERT M. HAELEN: So that's 800 -- so, in
11 total, it's \$850 million for the educational
12 facilities at the State-operated campuses;

13 We also asked for \$150 million for our
14 hospitals;

15 For a total of \$1 billion in one year, which
16 would be \$5 billion over the five years.

17 SENATOR JACKSON: And hospitals are
18 Brooklyn --

19 ROBERT M. HAELEN: Stony Brook.

20 SENATOR JACKSON: -- Downstate; right,
21 Stony Brook; and Upstate, those are the three
22 hospitals?

23 ROBERT M. HAELEN: Correct.

24 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay.

25 SENATOR STAVISKY: And Buffalo -- Buffalo

1 doesn't have a hospital, excuse me.

2 ROBERT M. HAELEN: Right.

3 So -- so, you know, that was the overall
4 need. We think it's a robust capital request.

5 I mean, we have to take into account how much
6 work you can actually physically do on a campus.

7 You can't tear a campus up in every little
8 corner, you have to keep it operational.

9 And as far as which campuses need the most
10 amount of attention, as I mentioned in my
11 presentation, we do a facility condition index.
12 That index is an indicator of how much renewal needs
13 campuses need.

14 We do have that by campus.

15 I don't have it with me here today, but we
16 certainly could provide that to you.

17 SENATOR JACKSON: Yeah, if we don't have
18 that, it would be appropriate for us to have that,
19 so that we can look at it and assess.

20 ROBERT M. HAELEN: Yes, absolutely, we can
21 provide that.

22 SENATOR JACKSON: So, I'm sorry, that was the
23 first year.

24 And then other than that, it's by index; is
25 that correct?

1 ROBERT M. HAELEN: It's -- it -- that's the
2 first year.

3 But I think the question was: Do we
4 understand, or do we know, where -- which campuses
5 have the most amount of need?

6 That facility index will indicate which ones
7 need more investment than others.

8 Some campuses are newer than others.

9 Some still have some old building stock that
10 needs to be renovated.

11 SENATOR JACKSON: So you indicated about a
12 billion dollars the first year?

13 ROBERT M. HAELEN: Correct.

14 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay. So do you have how
15 much you, based on everything that you've assessed,
16 about the second year, in fact? Or is it just going
17 by the index and looking at the individual needs?

18 ROBERT M. HAELEN: So when we look at our
19 renewal needs, we are -- and to maintain a facility
20 condition index of state of good repair, we're
21 looking at an investment of 850 million per year.

22 So the -- the request that we have put
23 forward also aligns with the data that we're getting
24 out of our system as to, how quickly is the SUNY
25 system decaying, and how much investment do we need

1 to halt or address that decay?

2 KARRIN BEE-DONOHUE: And I think to your
3 other part of the question, right now we're just
4 saying a billion a year, for \$5 billion.

5 We haven't indexed that to increase, based on
6 any escalation.

7 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay.

8 Okay. That's all for now.

9 I'm sorry that I missed some of your
10 testimony.

11 I was at a -- looking at capital needs of
12 parks in my district. And they took me on a tour of
13 Riverside Park, which is all part of my district.

14 And so I apologize for being late,
15 Madam Chair, and everybody else.

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

17 I must say, I've been working with a number
18 of the hospitals, because they have a special need;
19 they're in the red.

20 And in the budget, we tried very hard to have
21 that -- is it \$50 million? -- put into the capital
22 part rather than the expense part of the budget.

23 We were not successful.

24 ROBERT M. HAELEN: Yeah, it is a
25 capital-intensive business.

1 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yeah, it is, I know that.

2 But, we're looking to try to alleviate some
3 of the problems, because all of the hospitals
4 face -- the three hospitals do face that problem.

5 ROBERT M. HAELEN: We appreciate that.

6 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you very much.

7 The second panel will have two parts.

8 The first part will be UUP, Fred Kowal,
9 and -- the president of UUP, and, Richard Smardon,
10 SUNY distinguished service professor emeritus at
11 SUNY ESF, the environmental science and forestry
12 school.

13 And the second part, separately, will be the
14 Professional Staff Congress.

15 Let me also welcome Barbara Bowen, the
16 president of the Professional Staff Congress, and
17 Sharon Persinger, the treasurer of the Professional
18 Staff Congress.

19 Thank you for coming.

20 And I must point out that Dr. Kowal has
21 been to every one of the hearings that we have held,
22 from Buffalo, to Nassau County, and everything in
23 between.

24 FREDERICK E. KOWAL: And they have been
25 really enlightening.

1 And, Senator Stavisky, Senator Jackson,
2 I want to thank you both for your commitment to
3 public higher education, and especially to you,
4 Chairperson Stavisky, for putting these hearings
5 together, and, likewise, being all over the state,
6 even when climate conditions did not allow you to
7 travel as rapidly as you would have liked back from
8 Syracuse that one time.

9 I would also echo your earlier statement, and
10 recognize Chairperson Merryl Tisch who has joined
11 us.

12 And I think that speaks to the importance
13 that the leadership of SUNY is placing on the
14 conversation today.

15 And, thank you, Merryl Tisch.

16 I would -- once again, as I have done in my
17 previous testimonies, I have submitted written
18 testimony.

19 I would just like to make a couple of
20 comments, and then turn it over to my colleague from
21 the College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry,
22 because I think, again, as we have done in our other
23 sessions, I believe hearing from our rank-and-file
24 members and our experts is vitally important for
25 you.

1 UUP, a union of 37,000 members, believes that
2 the deferred divestment [sic] in SUNY is overdue and
3 should be dealt with as soon as possible.

4 That investment, above all, must be a
5 statement of what we believe, and how our state must
6 lead the way.

7 This past weekend in Madrid, we saw, once
8 again, the inability or unwillingness of the leaders
9 of the world to address the crisis that we face
10 globally.

11 The climate emergency, and dealing with that
12 emergency, has not occurred simply because of the
13 obstructionist behavior of the nations that produce
14 the most CO2.

15 And, unfortunately, with the
16 Trump Administration, the United States is actually
17 acting in a counterproductive and destructive way.

18 UUP believes very strongly that it is
19 imperative that New York State, among other states,
20 act as countervailing forces to what is occurring at
21 the national level and international level.

22 New York State has already acted with the
23 passage of the CPCLA, and I want to applaud the
24 Legislature and the Governor for taking that
25 important step, that historic step.

1 When it comes to capital, however, we need to
2 place an emphasis on how buildings are constructed
3 and the choices that are made in their design.

4 New buildings and new construction projects
5 at SUNY must not be designed to simply meet the
6 energy and environmental goals of today.

7 They need to meet the climate goals of 2040.

8 Any kind of new construction or major
9 renovations must result in at least carbon
10 neutrality.

11 We believe very strongly that SUNY, as an
12 institution, should lead the way in showing how the
13 state can be the transitional force in addressing
14 the climate crisis.

15 I was disturbed greatly at the hearing that
16 the Assembly, the joint committee hearing,
17 Environment Committee and Higher Ed Committee, three
18 weeks ago, where the leadership of SUNY had to
19 acknowledge that a brand-new residence hall being
20 constructed at Stony Brook University is going to be
21 heated by a natural gas boiler, and that there are
22 no solar panel-generating facilities at Stony Brook.

23 Likewise, major renovation going at
24 Marshal Hall at ESF, the heating system is going to
25 be a natural gas boiler.

1 This is not taking us in the direction we
2 need to go in.

3 We -- you know, I welcome the comments that
4 were made by the previous panel, but I think what's
5 lacking is the sense of urgency.

6 I just want to draw your attention to my
7 testimony.

8 We are proposing a series of what I believe
9 to be absolutely necessary steps for SUNY to take.

10 And I think that we also have to remember,
11 though, in dealing with the climate crisis, we are
12 not just dealing with environmental necessity.

13 It's also a necess -- it is an issue that
14 resonates in racial and economic justice terms.

15 Not only are the communities that are poorest
16 and communities of color those that are hit the
17 hardest by the climate emergency impacts, there's
18 also the response to the question that,
19 Senator Jackson, you asked just a little while ago,
20 and that is, where the resources will come from.

21 What we need is a fairer, more just tax
22 system.

23 We need to figure out the revenue side of
24 things that will bring about a more just economic
25 system while also addressing the climate crisis.

1 It can be done.

2 As Robert Kennedy stated years ago, he put it
3 best by saying:

4 "The future is not a gift; it is an
5 achievement. We have to work towards building a
6 sustainable future.

7 "We must do all we can to preserve our
8 environment for the generations that will follow us.

9 "It is our responsibility, and it is a
10 responsibility that we cannot and must not shirk."

11 Once again, on behalf of the entire
12 37,000 membership of UUP, I would like to thank you
13 for the opportunity once again to address you, and
14 now I'm going to turn it over to my colleague.

15 Richard.

16 RICHARD SMARDON: Thank you.

17 Senators, Stavisky and Jackson, and everybody
18 else here, we're very happy to be here to testify on
19 behalf of the United University Professionals.

20 I've been teaching at SUNY ESF for
21 36 1/2 years. I've been retired four years, and
22 I don't get this retirement thing at all. I'm
23 failing, totally. Okay?

24 So, anyhow, I've been asked to talk about,
25 you know, the capital budget in regard to the

1 New York State Climate Leadership and Community
2 Protection Act.

3 It's kind of hard to do, CLCPA, you know, or
4 whatever the acronym is.

5 So, just briefly, I've taught for a decade at
6 SUNY ESF, dealing with both climate, greenhouse gas
7 monitoring, and also climate-action planning.
8 And actually had students work with local
9 communities to do climate-action planning all
10 over Central New York. And, also, I taught
11 sustainability courses on the community scale.

12 So that's my, kind of, general background
13 here.

14 Also, I worked with Barbara. Right? Didn't
15 we --

16 BARBARA BOWEN: Yes.

17 RICHARD SMARDON: -- we did the -- we did --
18 2003, I ran a conference, basically saying, we
19 should have a SUNY-wide consortium dealing with
20 climate change.

21 BARBARA BOWEN: Right.

22 RICHARD SMARDON: You know, so, enough of
23 that.

24 BARBARA BOWEN: (Inaudible.)

25 RICHARD SMARDON: So, you know, Section 7 of

1 the act says all state agencies will assess and
2 implement strategies to reduce GHG emissions.
3 Right?

4 And it also states, if they can't do it, why?
5 you know, and what the alternatives are.

6 One way of kind of looking at this, one of my
7 homework assignments was, basically, looking at
8 which institutions, SUNY institutions, then CUNY,
9 were members of the American Society of
10 Sustainability in Higher Education, called "ASSHE."

11 They have a system called "STARS."

12 And, basically, you report what you've done,
13 including physical facilities, curriculum, as well
14 as leadership in your institution.

15 Now -- right now, we have about 11 SUNY
16 campuses are listed and ranked: gold (indicating),
17 silver (indicating), bronze (indicating).

18 There's only -- there's only -- there's only
19 a few of these. Right?

20 Some 14 other SUNY institutions are on the
21 STAR system. They're not -- they don't have a rank,
22 but they've reported in terms of the STAR system.
23 Okay?

24 This is one indication of where the
25 facilities are. They're self-reported, but it gives

1 you an indication, what they're doing in terms of
2 climate change and sustainability.

3 So it's a good data source.

4 It's not the same as what the SUNY folks have
5 just reported on, but it's just another indicator.

6 So the action options might include:

7 Certificates of renewable energy, which is
8 what SUNY is looking at right now, which you group
9 institutions together to buy renewable energy.

10 Developing sources on campus, or buy into
11 community renewable energy sources.

12 And we'll talk about that a little bit later.

13 So, I reviewed the SUNY plan in terms of the
14 New York Higher Education Large-Scale Renewable
15 Energy Consortium, and 16 campuses and the 4 private
16 campuses, basically, buying, you know, renewable
17 energy.

18 But I think there's three things we can do,
19 maybe, to augment that, or as part of that.

20 The first thing is, basically, doing SUNY
21 campus physical plant energy and GHG reductions,
22 which they've outlined, but there's maybe a few
23 more -- a few more options here.

24 The second thing is, what accounting method
25 do we use to say how far along we are, both from a

1 GHG-reduction point of view and from a
2 cost-effectiveness point of view?

3 And the third thing is, basically, how do we
4 roll out the education that we need to have for
5 professionals dealing with these kinds of issues as
6 well as community folks?

7 So these are the three.

8 Yeah, so we've got these consortium of
9 16 SUNY campuses, plus four privates, in the
10 New York Higher Education Large-Scale Renewable
11 Energy Consortium.

12 They're in the process of putting out RFPs
13 for the work that needs to be done, which is
14 admirable, I think.

15 But there's other kinds of things that can
16 happen.

17 If we look at, like, SUNY ESF, they've,
18 basically, spent about \$8 million -- no, I'm
19 sorry -- yeah, 8 million over 10 years; roughly,
20 about eight hundred and thirty-one dollars and
21 five hundred and fifty-one cents [sic] per year.

22 You wanted figures, I got figures.

23 Okay?

24 So -- but that's a relatively small campus.

25 Right?

1 So you could be talking a million dollars a
2 year, to half a million dollars a year, depending on
3 the size campus you have and what their needs are.
4 Right?

5 So I think that SUNY Central has done a
6 really great job of indicating what is there. I'm
7 sure in their database they have it.

8 But the thing is, that we need to have
9 specific things done for individual buildings,
10 electrification of water, space heating, use of
11 appliance energy standards, annual energy
12 benchmarking, use of performance contracting, which
13 I'm sure that they do.

14 And that's -- when Chancellor Johnson rolled
15 out the Clean Energy Roadmap in 2019, a lot of that
16 stuff was in there.

17 Great.

18 There's a thing that needs to be done in
19 terms of building systems and materials.

20 At SUNY ESF, we've been dealing a lot with
21 sort of life-cycle analysis.

22 If you do something, use a certain kind of
23 material, if you use a certain kind of system,
24 what's the life span of that? And then what happens
25 to it over time? And how do you -- how do -- how

1 much do you need to invest to maintain it?

2 Right?

3 So the whole life-cycle analysis is really
4 key to whatever work is being done, and the tools,
5 the methodology, to do that.

6 So the second thing -- so that's dealing with
7 sort of just the building systems.

8 I think we need a lot, in terms of what
9 I call "accounting and assessment methods," as well
10 as energy-related research.

11 I've actually done -- I've asked the research
12 foundation to pull every research project in the
13 recent past that SUNY investigators have done.

14 There's 84 different projects dealing with
15 clean energy. And I would say about 44 of those are
16 really good, sort of, high-value projects.

17 The problem is, how do you build on that?

18 How do you work it back in to whatever you're
19 doing in building systems or energy reduction?

20 So I think there's a whole bunch of stuff we
21 could do that could be in addition to the
22 consortium, would be assessment tools for measuring
23 reductions in energy use. Right?

24 If we -- and there's a lot of tools that are
25 out there, but the problem is, you need to use the

1 same kind of tools so you can compare the results
2 from one campus to another, or one building to
3 another.

4 In my appendix I have all the stuff lined
5 out.

6 A good test: Evaluate the best available
7 economic models, emission estimation techniques, and
8 other scientific methods.

9 This is direct from the Climate Leadership
10 Act. They say, we need to do this.

11 And another thing we need to do is, review
12 end-testing methods to calculate economic and social
13 benefits of the reductions; not only the economic
14 benefits of energy savings, are there some social
15 benefits, especially that could accrue to
16 disadvantaged communities?

17 We need to develop test methods to quantify
18 GHG offsets with emphasis on maximizing public
19 health and environmental benefits.

20 Sometimes, instead of doing direct energy
21 reduction or direct greenhouse gas reduction, we
22 say, well, we'll invest in an offset.

23 To me, this is sort of avoiding the major
24 issue.

25 We need to do it on-site as much as possible

1 versus going to an offset.

2 Now -- and the other thing that the climate
3 act calls for is develop and test methods of
4 calculating the social cost of carbon. Right?

5 Is there a social cost to certain
6 communities, especially disadvantaged communities?
7 What is that social cost?

8 We need to test methods for assessing and
9 identifying contributing sources and categories of
10 sources.

11 Some pollution sources are worse than others.

12 We all know about brownfields and toxic
13 waste.

14 Depending on the kind of emissions we are
15 having, there could be health effects as well as
16 environmental effects.

17 And, in fact, the SUNY Center for
18 Environmental Health and Medicine, which is,
19 SUNY ESF and Upstate Medical is working on this kind
20 of thing.

21 And, also, at SUNY Albany, they're doing a
22 lot of work in atmospheric effects.

23 Implement easily replicated renewable energy
24 projects.

25 I think there's a real opportunity here, and

1 a great example is SUNY Binghamton.

2 They're working with three different
3 communities on solar installations that benefit the
4 community directly. Right?

5 Great example, I think.

6 Develop minimum percentage of energy storage
7 projects.

8 The big problem with a lot of renewable
9 energy is we can't figure out how to store it.

10 We need either immense batteries or some
11 other way of doing that.

12 Now, it so happens that both SUNY Binghamton
13 and SUNY Stony Brook are doing research in this
14 area, in terms of trying to figure out how to store
15 this kind of renewable energy so it can be used.

16 The last piece I want to talk about is the
17 workforce training program.

18 I looked at all through -- all through SUNY,
19 at the doctoral institutions, at the four-year
20 institutions, at the community colleges, that came
21 up with programs.

22 There's a number of programs already existing
23 in clean energy or clean-energy development. Right?

24 So, like, for instance, SUNY Buffalo,
25 Cortland, and Oswego have clean-energy

1 master's-degree programs.

2 SUNY, Canton, Cobleskill, SUNY ESF, offers
3 bachelor's-degree programs.

4 Morrisville, Schenectady, and Ulster have
5 workforce development continuing-education programs.

6 This is the kind of stuff we need.

7 So this needs to be expanded, I think, and
8 become part of the consortium activity in terms of
9 workforce and training development.

10 And one thing I worked on as an example,
11 another thing we could do is, have a -- like a
12 million-dollar-per-year support program for
13 developing programs of higher ed, whether it's
14 doctoral, master's, undergraduate, or even, you
15 know, external kind of degree programs, and -- and,
16 you know, learn from what others have done.

17 The other thing that we could do is, we could
18 do a demonstration seed grant program that would
19 pair a SUNY campus with a disadvantaged community.

20 So it would be a pairing on the development
21 of renewable energy, or energy savings, or GHG
22 reduction, with a community and the educational
23 institution.

24 And a good example, again, is SUNY Binghamton
25 and the work that they're doing with those three

1 communities.

2 And what I did, over 10 years, is worked with
3 the Central New York Regional Planning and
4 Development Board, with communities all through the
5 Central New York area, to do their carbon footprint
6 and their climate-action plan.

7 Some of these are very poor rural
8 communities.

9 Okay, so that's my sort of recommendation.

10 And I worked for 25 years with The Great
11 Lakes Research Consortium, one of the most
12 successful consortial activities in New York State,
13 with SUNY.

14 We know it can be done.

15 So those are my comments.

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

17 And thank you for the thought and the time
18 that you put into this presentation.

19 I must tell you, when I went to Syracuse, it
20 was simply the forestry school.

21 And today it's become an
22 internationally-recognized center, not just dealing
23 with trees, but dealing with the environment and all
24 of the issues associated with it.

25 So we thank you for all of the work that you

1 and your colleagues at ESF. It's quite an
2 operation.

3 As you said, I was up in Syracuse, Halloween
4 night, October 31st was the hearing. And there were
5 a lot of references to all of the good work that ESF
6 has done. And Cobleskill.

7 Do you have any questions?

8 SENATOR JACKSON: No. I'm going to wait to
9 hear from them first (indicating).

10 SENATOR STAVISKY: Okay.

11 Next we have the president of the
12 Professional Staff Congress, Barbara Bowen.

13 BARBARA BOWEN: Thank you.

14 Thank you very much, Senators, and thank you
15 for holding so many hearings.

16 I think this is the last in your travels.

17 SENATOR STAVISKY: Not much time left
18 (inaudible).

19 BARBARA BOWEN: No, not much time left, and
20 thank you for crisscrossing the state.

21 I know you also held one in Queens earlier,
22 and we thank you for the logistical work, the work
23 of your staff and others, to put together all of
24 this, and I think it's critically important.

25 I'm very pleased to be here.

1 In a minute you'll hear from the PSC
2 treasurer, Sharon Persinger, who's also a professor
3 of math and computer science at Bronx Community
4 College.

5 But I'm going to talk a little bit, overall.

6 And also say, how honored I am to be with my
7 SUNY colleagues, and very respectful of the work
8 that's been going on for a long time on
9 environmental justice.

10 I think what we just heard from the two
11 speakers from UUP shows, clearly, why universities
12 should be at the forefront of rethinking building,
13 not tagging behind, looking for dollars, which is
14 where we are right now.

15 It takes money to be at the forefront of
16 environmental redesign of stable and renewable
17 energy of carbon-neutral building.

18 Here we have a center of thinking about just
19 those topics, the center of research.

20 We should be drawing, the State should be
21 drawing, on those centers, and putting universities
22 as exemplars of how to rethink and rebuild, rather
23 than always having to say, Could we please have a
24 few dollars to fix the elevator?

25 But I do want to get the elevators fixed, so

1 I am going to speak a little bit about that too.

2 But I hope that you will carry to your
3 colleagues and to the leadership the idea that
4 universities should be a place to generate a new
5 thinking about building.

6 And we have the incubator right there.

7 We also have an opportunity to work with our
8 unionized colleagues in the building sector, and
9 other sectors, to produce green jobs.

10 And I think this is something that the State
11 should take the lead on.

12 I also want to say that I know today is about
13 capital budget, but I can't speak to senators about
14 budget without mentioning the operating budget.

15 I know you've done other hearings on that,
16 but, as you know, that is absolutely urgent.

17 We did not come out with substantial new
18 funding. We barely broke even last year in the
19 operating funds.

20 And we're counting on you this year because
21 the operating funds are at the daily center of what
22 we do.

23 The PSC supports CUNY's request for
24 additional capital funding.

25 We'd note that there hasn't been a five-year

1 capital plan since 2008.

2 That is a big problem, because it means
3 constant -- constant on-the-spot planning,
4 rethinking, not able to undertake some big projects.

5 And I'm sure people from the CUNY
6 administration can speak to that better than I can.

7 But we support their request and would
8 actually propose more funding.

9 When we've gone back to our campus leadership
10 at each campus, they've said, yes, the request is
11 good, but we actually need more.

12 CUNY has requested, I think, \$1.031 billion
13 for the first year of a five-year plan, and then,
14 over five years, it would be \$4.5 billion.

15 That's, I believe, what's in their capital
16 request.

17 We support that.

18 We also urgently need funds for critical
19 maintenance.

20 As you know, you've been there, a lot of the
21 CUNY buildings are old buildings.

22 Some are really beautiful old buildings, but
23 they are, literally, crumbling when we touch them.

24 I have been recently to some buildings where
25 you touch the wall and it falls apart.

1 That is unsafe, and it's not good.

2 And, I guess I would say, most urgently, that
3 it sends a message, not just a symbolic message, but
4 a material message, to our students, that New York
5 doesn't care about your education, because if you
6 are in a building where they're, literally, propping
7 up ceiling tiles like these with a broom handle
8 stuck into a bucket, so that, when it rains, the
9 water will sort of travel down that broom handle and
10 go into the bucket rather than flooding the
11 classroom.

12 When you go into a bathroom at any CUNY
13 senior campus, or community, and see that two of the
14 three stalls have plastic bags over them because
15 they don't work, where the sinks don't work, where
16 we've had problems with safe water, the water coming
17 out brown, what does that tell our students about
18 how the State values their education and them?

19 If you walk in every day and see that, you
20 are seeing the message: Your education doesn't
21 matter, you don't matter, because all we've got for
22 you are buildings that are untenable.

23 And it is an issue of racial and economic
24 justice, as my colleague said.

25 CUNY student body is 74 percent people of

1 color. The majority of our students come from
2 family incomes below \$30,000 a year.

3 When they get to their colleges, they are
4 seeing more poverty than they saw in their
5 high school funding.

6 That is the wrong message.

7 And not only is it a message, it's a reality,
8 because you cannot study well, if you're watching
9 the drippings coming down; if you are watching,
10 worried, that there are droppings from vermin.

11 You cannot study as well as you should.

12 You cannot teach as well as you should.

13 And all of those conditions actively
14 undermine the project of teaching and learning.

15 The fact that so much does go on so
16 successfully is pretty miraculous, despite the
17 conditions.

18 But we should not have to work despite the
19 conditions. And above all, our students should not
20 have to study despite the conditions.

21 The conditions should support, not undermine.

22 So I just want to say a word about
23 two campuses, just to give you an idea, and then
24 turn it over to Sharon, if I may.

25 I just wanted to look at Brooklyn College,

1 where there's been an active website going for
2 several years, called "Broke-lin College," where
3 people post to "Broke-lin College."

4 You get the idea.

5 I'm sure you've looked at it, where there are
6 hundreds of pictures of these minor, and sometimes
7 major, problems on the campus that people send in.

8 And there's an awareness on the campus that
9 the college president is working on things, but,
10 without the money, it is very difficult to do it.

11 This should be a year capital funding, as we
12 know, is easier to do than operating funds.

13 There's -- this is a good year to do movement
14 on capital funding.

15 So the -- from Brooklyn, I have a response
16 from our chapter leadership.

17 "The total request, as big as it is, is not
18 nearly enough to address the facilities and
19 infrastructure needs of the campus.

20 "We have woefully outmoded science labs and
21 teaching facilities, crumbling ceiling tiles,
22 floors, and walls, an old HVAC system that breaks
23 regularly, and many other challenges.

24 "We have managed, with a dedicated new VP for
25 finance, to patch together fixes for emergencies,

1 and a talented new president has raised private
2 donations for specific capital projects.

3 "But the college cannot fundraise and
4 Band-Aid its way out of this mess of hundreds of
5 millions of dollars in deferred maintenance.

6 "At the last meeting they had with the
7 college president, we were told that the ADA lift
8 serving Whitehead Hall" -- one of their buildings --
9 "is tested three times a day, and gets mechanically
10 impaired just from the testing procedure.

11 "It will cost \$20 million to replace, we are
12 told, so the administration is arranging a new
13 maintenance contract, hoping to keep it somewhat
14 functioning."

15 That's one example.

16 There are many, many others all around CUNY,
17 where there are these patched-together Band-Aid
18 solutions because the overall solution is lacking.

19 And you keep doing that over and over again,
20 and you have a building that does not function.

21 At Hunter Campus, I think you know, the
22 longstanding issue, there had been a great hope with
23 the partnership with Sloan-Kettering, that they
24 could finally build a better facility for nursing
25 than the Brookdale Campus now.

1 Brookdale is the one where I went, literally,
2 where the walls are crumbling.

3 There was supposed to be a partnership with
4 MSK.

5 The ribbon cutting on the Sloan-Kettering
6 building was, I think, last week, they're finished.

7 And there's nothing that has happened on the
8 CUNY building.

9 I know that's a joint project, and -- but it
10 would be really important. Our nursing program is
11 terrific.

12 There's a shortage of nurses.

13 And when they have to study in a completely
14 unacceptable campus, it undermines the program; it
15 undermines the validity of the program.

16 And you'll hear other things from Sharon, but
17 I would ask you to keep in mind:

18 The testimony from UUP about long-term goals
19 that must translate into short-term goals;

20 About the fact that people have to study in
21 conditions that are unsafe, unhealthy, untenable,
22 unsupportable, I think, by this state.

23 And the solution has to be revenue.

24 We will be with you.

25 This shouldn't be a year where we can't get

1 new taxes.

2 I'm tired of hearing that.

3 There is support for that.

4 And we will be there to support you for a
5 fair taxation system, so that there is the money
6 there, so that the students who go to CUNY, and
7 SUNY, but I'm speaking about CUNY now, have decent
8 resources; otherwise, the message they take is: We
9 do not want you to succeed.

10 We're trying to change that message, and
11 I know you are too.

12 So thank you very much.

13 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

14 You will provide copies of your written --

15 BARBARA BOWEN: Yes.

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: -- yes.

17 BARBARA BOWEN: Thank you.

18 SHARON PERSINGER: Thank you, Senators, for
19 the opportunity to speak.

20 I would like to be able to be forward-looking
21 and talk about the importance of building for
22 sustainability, for implementing new technologies,
23 for providing a transition to clean energy on our
24 campuses, but I think, in the reality of the campus
25 that I've spent my career working on, I really have

1 to be kind of dismal.

2 I think that CUNY really -- what CUNY needs
3 is the funding to maintain what it has.

4 CUNY's been severely underfunded for decades.
5 Bronx Community College, the campus where
6 I teach, has been underfunded for decades.

7 You can see it in the lack of basic
8 maintenance on our campus, in the degradation of the
9 infrastructure we have.

10 If you have not visited our campus, I urge
11 you to.

12 It was built by the architects, the big
13 architects, of the time.

14 The campus was originally built for NYU,
15 starting in 1900.

16 So we have McKim, Mead & White buildings, and
17 then, from the 1960s, we have Marcel Breuer
18 buildings, that people come to the campus to take
19 pictures of.

20 Our newest big structure was built by
21 Robert A.M. Stern. It is a LEED-certified building,
22 a lovely building, that I worry about, because
23 I worry where the money is going to come from to
24 give it the attention that it needs.

25 What you find in -- in our buildings are:

1 Leaky roofs. The broken bathrooms that Professor --
2 President Bowen talked about. And, rodents and
3 insect infestations.

4 I just want to tell you about a couple of
5 specifics in the last year.

6 I have a catalog from the 20 years that I've
7 been there, about all of the major problems that
8 we've had.

9 But just in the last year, January 2019, and
10 what was the coldest weekend of the winter, there
11 was a failure of a pump in the heating system in
12 Colston Hall, one these Marcel Breuer buildings.
13 It's where the English department and the English
14 faculty offices and a large collection of classrooms
15 are.

16 Water collected in the pipes because it
17 wasn't being circulated. The pipes froze.

18 When heat came back on, all those pipes were
19 burst, the building was flooded.

20 Several pipes through the building broke.
21 There was flooding in a lot of different locations;
22 in classrooms, in departmental offices, and faculty
23 offices.

24 It meant that, when the semester started just
25 within a week, there were over 500 classes that had

1 to be relocated.

2 And it took weeks for the building to be
3 reopened. And then a longer time after that before
4 people could actually get into all of their
5 classroom spaces.

6 This was a real disruption.

7 It probably meant that there were students
8 who didn't come back to Bronx Community College
9 because they were afraid that something like that
10 would happen again.

11 And, I'm -- I can say that, I'm not sure we
12 can say that it won't happen again.

13 One of the things that came out when the
14 engineer did a report on this, was that the heating
15 parts that burst had been installed in 1984, and
16 were supposed to have a life expectancy of 20 years.

17 So they should have been replaced 15 years
18 previously.

19 We need funding for this basic kind of
20 heating-system maintenance; for the equipment
21 upgrades that would be required for, for the staff
22 to see that those system run correctly.

23 And then a really mundane, but basic kind of
24 thing that happened, that you have to tend to every
25 day, because of our -- because we don't have the

1 funding, our custodial staff has been cut.

2 So that means that, again, just this basic
3 stuff, the trash isn't being taken out, which means
4 you get bugs and rats.

5 My colleague in the English department said
6 that, just a week ago, her -- the departmental
7 assistant came in to find rat droppings all over her
8 desk. And she was told that she should leave them
9 there so that the exterminator, who was coming the
10 next day, could investigate.

11 So that meant that she sat in an office with
12 rat droppings for a day.

13 You know, we need better than this; our
14 students do, the people who work there with our
15 students.

16 And -- and it's -- it's -- it's depressing
17 and demoralizing to work in an environment like
18 that, whether you're faculty, staff, or student, and
19 find, as President Bowen said, that it just doesn't
20 seem that -- somewhere, at some level, someone
21 doesn't think that what you're doing is important
22 enough to be funded.

23 And we just need that to change.

24 SENATOR STAVISKY: What do you estimate the
25 cost of remediation?

1 Are you talking critical maintenance, or
2 tearing the building down, and --

3 SHARON PERSINGER: Well --

4 BARBARA BOWEN: Oh, no, we don't want to tear
5 the buildings down.

6 SHARON PERSINGER: -- yeah, no, I think these
7 are critical maintenance issues.

8 But --

9 BARBARA BOWEN: Well, CUNY -- I mean,
10 probably (inaudible) -- probably want to look at
11 CUNY's capital request. And then they put the
12 critical maintenance, some of it in the operating
13 request.

14 But they have requested funds for community
15 colleges because, as we know, the State does
16 50 percent of the capital funding for community
17 colleges.

18 They have requested \$703 million for the
19 community colleges in the first year of a five-year
20 plan. And some -- that, I think is pure capital new
21 investment. They've also got a request for
22 infrastructure broken out by college.

23 I don't know if they've got it down to
24 individual colleges, but, for critical maintenance,
25 it's -- I mean, I think we should look there in the

1 request, but also, as Sharon said, on the personnel
2 side.

3 I shortened the piece from the colleague at
4 Brooklyn, but he also said they now have half the
5 number of facility staff that are required by good
6 practices.

7 And I'm sure that's true at some SUNY
8 colleges too.

9 So there's -- the number would be contained
10 in the personnel request as well as the critical
11 maintenance request.

12 SENATOR STAVISKY: Because CUNY received, if
13 my memory is correct, 284 million in critical
14 maintenance in the April budget that was enacted.

15 And I must say, the original building at
16 Bronx Community College, when it was first founded,
17 was the high school that I attended.

18 SHARON PERSINGER: How did it look then?

19 SENATOR STAVISKY: It was old. It had -- it
20 was old when I went there.

21 And I'm not talking the new building.

22 This was an old building. They turned it
23 over to -- they got a new building near
24 De Witt Clinton, I'm talking about science. And the
25 building then became Bronx Community College, and

1 that was a long time ago.

2 So I understand.

3 And my first teaching job, incidentally, was
4 at what is now John Jay College.

5 But back in the '60s, it was -- there was a
6 single building there called Heron High School. And
7 that had been De Witt Clinton.

8 So we have, I guess, recycling is not always
9 appropriate.

10 But thank you for your testimony.

11 BARBARA BOWEN: Thank you, Senator.

12 SENATOR JACKSON: So, it's shameful to listen
13 to some of the testimonies regarding some of the
14 conditions that exist in our classrooms.

15 And I would tend to agree with you -- I --
16 not intend to -- I agree with you, if those that
17 have the power to make the changes do not do it, and
18 the conditions are getting worse, the message is
19 loud and clear: We don't care about your education.

20 Especially, as the treasurer, Ms. Persinger,
21 indicated about a professor coming in and seeing rat
22 droppings all over her desk, and being told you that
23 should leave it there for the staff that deals with
24 rodents can come and investigate, well, I don't
25 think you should leave them there because they're

1 rat droppings.

2 If anything, take a picture.

3 What is there to investigate?

4 You want to find out how they got in the
5 building? how they got in the classroom?

6 Well, then, look at all of the places where
7 any rodent would get in, and behind the cabinets and
8 under sinks and -- and could, basically, where the
9 water pipes come in, that's where it is.

10 I mean, you don't need to be a research
11 scientist to understand that.

12 So it is shameful.

13 And as you know, I've been fighting the
14 system for just primary education, but, really,
15 education overall.

16 But the lawsuits that we filed on behalf of
17 the children of New York State and New York City,
18 and the fight still goes on.

19 Obviously, in looking at the situation in
20 this coming budget, people are saying, especially in
21 the Governor's office, that we're facing a
22 \$6.2 billion deficit, and \$4 billion of that has to
23 do with Medicaid.

24 And my understanding, in reading the papers,
25 and what have you --

1 And as I know, everything we read is not
2 absolutely always true, we know that for a fact.

3 -- but they said that, about 1.6 or 1.8 was
4 rolled over from the previous year.

5 And that's what we, and our colleagues both
6 in the Assembly and the Senate, and the Governor,
7 has to deal with.

8 And as you know, we, at the Governor's
9 urging, passed a property-tax cap of 2 percent in
10 New York State, with the exception of New York City.

11 And, obviously, by doing so, we, from a
12 property-tax point of view, is going to limit the
13 amount of income that's going to come into the state
14 coffers.

15 And then, not by law, but by my understand,
16 by the Governor's order, executive order, or the
17 Governor's direction, or whatever you want to call
18 it, and I don't really know --

19 And, Matthew, I need to find out exactly.

20 -- is this the Governor saying, This is what
21 we are going to do? Is it by executive order?

22 Because I know it's not by law, because we
23 didn't pass it and no one said it's the law, a
24 spending cap of 2 percent.

25 Well, if that's not enough money to,

1 basically, feed the family, and when I say "feed the
2 family," need CUNY and SUNY from an operating point
3 of view, feed SUNY and CUNY from a
4 critical-maintenance point of view, because the
5 critical maintenance means, we can't -- you know, we
6 are not talking about building a new building.

7 This is stuff that needs to be done, like
8 indicated with those pipes broken and 500 classes
9 had to be reverted elsewhere, and so forth and so
10 on.

11 And, obviously, I -- I'm a -- I sit on every
12 education committee in the Senate, Higher Education
13 Committee, the Education Committee --

14 SENATOR STAVISKY: I serve on the Education
15 Committee.

16 SENATOR JACKSON: I know.

17 And Toby serves on the Education also.

18 -- and the New York City Department of
19 Education, those are the three committees that deal
20 with education.

21 But, also, I'm a member of the caucus, the
22 Black, Puerto Rican, Latino, and Asian caucus.

23 And these are all issues and concerns that
24 you're discussing, that we hear in every committee
25 that we're on, including the Finance Committee in

1 which Liz Krueger chairs.

2 But, then, there's a way out.

3 The question is: Are we willing to take that
4 way?

5 Are we willing to go through that door, open
6 that door, and deal with it?

7 As you know, the Fiscal Policy Institute,
8 which many unions help start many years ago, and are
9 involved in that, they have ways in order to
10 increase revenue.

11 And the question is: Are we going to attempt
12 to increase revenues to deal with all of the issues
13 that we're being dealt with?

14 Not only in CUNY and SUNY as far as
15 operating, and I've been told by one of my
16 constituents, that it's active in CUNY.

17 He said, when you go up to Albany, please
18 talk to your colleagues, that we must have the
19 increase for the contract that you just agreed to in
20 the budget, because, if it's not in the budget, it
21 has to come out of the college. And the colleges
22 can't afford it.

23 And, clearly, one of my neighbors that lives
24 on the same floor where I live at, he's an adjunct
25 professor. And he runs to different classes and

1 different colleges in order to try to just get a
2 certain standard of living.

3 And I'm not talking about way up there
4 (indicating). I'm talking about the average
5 individual living in New York City, dealing with
6 rent, because they don't own, they rent in the same
7 building that I rent, and all the other things that
8 come with being a New York City resident.

9 So I say that to say to all of you, that I'm
10 glad that our Chairman -- our Chairperson has held
11 these hearings around.

12 And I've been told, not only as far as higher
13 education, but, education, and budget, and revenue,
14 and all of those hearings that have been held, that
15 this is like light being shined on the problems,
16 because these type of hearings never took place
17 before in the numbers that they're taking place now.

18 And it takes time and energy, of not only the
19 members of the state Senate that are chairing the
20 various committees, like Senator Stavisky, and the
21 staff, but it's extremely important.

22 And I've said, when it comes to the
23 education, I'm thinking about, okay, this gives us
24 more ammunition.

25 And I said, no, no, no. Let me not use that

1 term because, because the "ammunition," to me, it
2 relates to guns and weapons. And we don't want to
3 use that.

4 This gives us more documentation to support
5 the ask of the Senate leadership, Toby and
6 Higher Education, Shelley Mayer in Education,
7 John Liu in New York City Education, and helps us to
8 document for those that believe that the budget is
9 enough to deal with it, this is more documentation
10 that the needs are greater than, really.

11 And, especially, you hear people talk about
12 the federal government, that our president did,
13 "SALT," you know, state and local taxes, that
14 situation.

15 So I'm just happy that I'm on -- a member of
16 the state Senate, trying to fight on behalf of all
17 of you, and the constituents that I represent.

18 And I thank Toby for leading; someone that
19 has the experience and the knowledge, especially
20 like she said, of the campuses that she went to, and
21 she knows those buildings were old then.

22 And I'm glad that you, Mr. Spardon [sic],
23 Richard, from SUNY ESF, and the UUP activists, when
24 you said that you're not going anywhere.

25 We don't want to you go anywhere.

1 We need people like you, with your knowledge
2 and your expertise, to help the youngbloods.

3 And I'm not that young, but --

4 RICHARD SMARDON: You mean I have to stick
5 around some more?

6 SENATOR JACKSON: Yes, yes, we need you.

7 And I thank you, I thank all of you, for
8 coming in.

9 But I just had one question.

10 You mentioned about how many SUNY colleges
11 were involved in that consortium, or --

12 RICHARD SMARDON: Consortium, yes.

13 SENATOR JACKSON: -- yeah, and you only
14 talked about, like, 12 or 15.

15 And I'm saying to myself, wait a minute.

16 There are 64 SUNY campuses.

17 So what numbers are we talking about, you
18 mentioned?

19 RICHARD SMARDON: Yeah, there's 60 -- there's
20 16, and then 4 private colleges, with the consortium
21 for higher ed, to buy this aggregate of renewable
22 energy. Right?

23 But if you look at the STAR system, you got
24 64 campuses, and only 11 of these have ratings.
25 Right?

1 Another 14 are listed.

2 And the rest of SUNY, 41 campuses, are not
3 listed in the STAR system.

4 So maybe they have inventories of what
5 they've done, maybe they don't, but we don't know.

6 So the question is: How much work do they
7 need relative to the other campuses?

8 SENATOR JACKSON: I would think, in my
9 opinion, that if I was the president of a SUNY
10 campus, and especially if I'm aware -- I don't
11 assume that everyone is aware of that, but
12 considering the fact that this is not just your
13 campus, this is a statewide action, that I should be
14 aware of it, at least I should express some interest
15 in it, to want join that, because that would be the
16 benefit of all.

17 I'm just throwing that out for whatever it's
18 worth.

19 RICHARD SMARDON: It's a major recruiting
20 tool, literally.

21 Those campuses that rank high are the ones
22 the some of the students want to go to.

23 SENATOR JACKSON: It's frustrating.

24 BARBARA BOWEN: Agreed, agreed.

25 SHARON PERSINGER: Agreed.

1 SENATOR JACKSON: But I think that we -- so
2 I'm just (indiscernible) -- and let me finalize this
3 (indiscernible), I'm sorry.

4 Let me just say this to you:

5 That, in the papers, when it talked about the
6 6.1- or 6.2-billion-dollar deficit, with \$4 billion
7 for Medicaid, I've heard people say, Don't worry.
8 The Governor always does that. It's going to be
9 taken care of. We're going to find a way.

10 Then, again, I hear in that -- you know, as
11 what the papers reported, that the Speaker of the
12 state Assembly saying, that he'd rather raise taxes
13 rather than make the cuts first.

14 That's a choice.

15 And so I am hoping that, collectively, we in
16 the state Legislature will say, Let's raise the
17 revenue to do what we have to do.

18 And the constituents that we may hear from,
19 complaining about raising taxes, or, hearing from
20 constituents, they're saying, you're doing the right
21 thing, we must make sure that the money is well
22 spent, and accountable, for everyone, so when we
23 stand up, we can stand up and say, the money is
24 being well spent.

25 That's what I have to say.

1 Thank you, Madam Chair.

2 BARBARA BOWEN: Senator Jackson, if I could
3 just say, you mentioned Carl Heastie, the Assembly
4 Leader, and also others, on the issue of taxation.

5 I think we would be united in asking you to
6 go to the Leader of the Senate and --
7 Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and ask for her
8 leadership and support on increased taxation,
9 following the Fiscal Policy Institute plan. There's
10 also a revenue coalition that's pushing for a
11 super-millionaire's and billionaire's tax.

12 The number of millionaires in the state has
13 grown 74 percent since the passage of the
14 millionaire's tax.

15 So the idea that we're losing millionaires is
16 been proven completely false.

17 And it would be powerful if the Senate Leader
18 took the position that you just described, saying,
19 there is a way to do fair taxation.

20 We're undertaxed in this state because it's
21 not really a progressive taxation system.

22 And that, in fact, if you asked people, would
23 you rather spend \$9.14 more so that CUNY could
24 survive, and take that out of your tax bill, they
25 would say yes.

1 That's one figure that we've seen.

2 Sometimes we'd have to work out, really, the
3 figure for now.

4 But I think it's really important, as you
5 said, the 2 percent spending cap, which is an
6 artifice, and it gets -- it gets dropped for -- in
7 certain arenas. And we're concerned about that.

8 There needs to be more spending, there's a
9 lot of ground to make up.

10 And we hope that you will bring that message,
11 and that Senator Stewart-Cousins will feel
12 supported.

13 I mean, she was very bold in putting through,
14 you know, really huge changes last year, that you
15 supported, and you brought changes on non-fiscal
16 items: On the Voting Act. On Dreamers -- well
17 Dreamers had a fiscal component. On women's rights.
18 On the rent laws.

19 But none of those really pierced the
20 austerity funding of the state budget.

21 So we hope the Senate will be as imaginative
22 this year on fiscal issues, and have the leadership
23 on the fiscal side, that you showed last year in the
24 majority on the non-fiscal side.

25 SENATOR JACKSON: Well, I say to you that

1 we've had discussions. And the Leader is clearly
2 aware, and, obviously, focusing on what we have to
3 do to make sure that we're in line with the people
4 that we represent.

5 That's for sure.

6 And, obviously, I've said to people, not in
7 the Senate, because we all -- but I said to people,
8 understanding, please understand, our Leader and all
9 senators that have been there for a long time, Toby,
10 and Gustavo for eight years, and others, this was
11 the -- is the first year that they're in leadership.

12 So, in essence, they're new in the
13 leadership.

14 And understanding we had so much pressure the
15 first year of our two-year term, and we survived
16 that.

17 And we're going to improve that even more so,
18 with the goals and objectives of making sure that we
19 continue to do what's best on behalf of the people,
20 not only of New York City, but New York State.

21 And that's why Toby and others have held
22 hearings around the state in order to hear what they
23 have to say.

24 So, for sure.

25 SENATOR STAVISKY: And let me just add to

1 that, that Senator Stewart-Cousins has -- obviously,
2 is aware of the problem.

3 But she -- we are all looking at
4 alternatives, in term -- that are more equalizing
5 than the property tax, for example.

6 We have a task force looking at the property
7 tax, how education is funded, foundation aid, these
8 are all issues -- the pied-à-terre tax, which sort
9 of fell off the table right at budget time, these
10 are all issues that are open for discussion.

11 We just had a retreat, last Monday and
12 Tuesday, and these are all issues.

13 We spent a lot of time on the health-care
14 issue.

15 We spent time on higher education. I did a
16 quick presentation.

17 And we're looking at all of those issues.

18 But I thank you all very much.

19 And, hopefully, we will have a better budget
20 come Jan -- come April.

21 I was going to say January because that's,
22 presumably, when we'll see the executive budget.

23 But, thank you all for coming.

24 BARBARA BOWEN: Thank you so much.

25

1 SENATOR STAVISKY: Next we have four
2 individuals.

3 There are a number of additional people in
4 the room.

5 But, throughout the hearings we've held, I've
6 said that the stars of all of the hearings, with all
7 due respect to Dr. Kowal, have been the students.

8 And, we welcome the students:

9 Austin Ostro, the president of the SUNY
10 Student Assembly;

11 Timothy Hunter, president of the CUNY
12 University Student Senate;

13 Fay Yanofsky, USS vice chair of fiscal
14 affairs;

15 And Sakia Fletcher, SGA president (SUNY
16 Government Association president) of Medgar Evers.

17 And I have seen each of you at previous
18 hearings, and we thank you again, and we thank you
19 for your testimony, because, to me, the students are
20 the clients.

21 And the testimony, I must tell you, and most
22 of you have been at all -- almost all of the
23 hearings that we've held.

24 I must tell you, when -- I don't remember
25 which student government president testified and

1 described how he lived in a car for six weeks.

2 That, to me -- or, another student government
3 president testified as being a single parent, and
4 trying to study and support a family and be part of
5 the student leadership.

6 That was really telling to many of us.

7 And we thank you.

8 Austin, who wants to go first?

9 AUSTIN OSTRO: Thank you so much,
10 Chairwoman Stavisky, for your leadership.

11 And I know the CUNY and SUNY folks have
12 really enjoyed, as well, all of the hearings.

13 I think they've shined a light on a lot of
14 important issues, and I'm so glad that we can
15 continue the conversation on capital today.

16 So, my name is Austin Ostro. I am the
17 president of the SUNY Student Assembly, which
18 represents the 1.4 million students at the
19 State University of New York.

20 I am also the student member of the SUNY
21 Board of Trustees, and a grad student at the
22 University at Albany.

23 We, as the student body of SUNY, primarily
24 want two things.

25 We want SUNY to be affordable.

1 And I want to again thank the leadership of
2 the Senate Higher Education Committee in hosting
3 conversations on affordability throughout the fall.

4 I think a lot of great ideas came from all of
5 the various SUNY stakeholders that participated in
6 those hearings.

7 But we also want SUNY to be high-quality.

8 We want to have top academic programs that
9 attract the best and brightest students from around
10 the state, country, and the world.

11 We want to have strong student-support
12 services, including academic advisement and
13 mental-health services, so that students can thrive
14 while they're pursuing their higher education.

15 And, also, just as importantly, we need
16 world-class facilities where students and faculty
17 can work and learn and live in environments that
18 foster academic success.

19 A SUNY degree isn't just affordable, and it's
20 not just essential that it be affordable, it's
21 essential that it be valuable.

22 And investing in the experience of students
23 within SUNY is the best way to increase the value of
24 our degree.

25 Capital, unfortunately, has been somewhat

1 neglected in recent years.

2 Multiple years of funding at levels not
3 adequate for critical maintenance, let alone new
4 projects, has left some of our buildings,
5 unfortunately, to rot.

6 At Nassau Community College, where we hosted
7 our Senate Higher Education Hearing a few months
8 back, water was, literally, dripping from the
9 ceiling onto Senators and witnesses.

10 And I think it very --

11 SENATOR STAVISKY: (Inaudible.)

12 AUSTIN OSTRO: Maybe that's why they chose
13 that building.

14 -- I think it very deliberately showed how --
15 how important this issue is in a way that was
16 crystal-clear to everyone in the room, including Tim
17 and I.

18 We need that kind of investment in order to
19 build on what we offer already.

20 Some of our buildings -- it's not just
21 dripping water from the ceiling that might be
22 annoying.

23 Some of our buildings are becoming unsafe,
24 and have to be shut down, can't be used for classes,
25 can't be used for dormitories, throughout a

1 semester. And that limits what campuses can offer
2 because our campuses are recruiting students from
3 around the world.

4 And we need to have the space to offer
5 academic programs and support services to them, and
6 house them and feed them.

7 And if buildings are shut down, that's
8 limiting the space that's available for those
9 purposes.

10 Who, when they go on a tour of a campus, is
11 going to want to attend the school if they see
12 things, like, caution tape across buildings,
13 sidewalks closed off, not being guaranteed housing
14 because a major dormitory is shut down for a
15 semester.

16 Those aren't the ways to attract talent.

17 Those aren't the ways to offer a valuable
18 degree to everyone across the state.

19 Of course, another component of this is
20 sustainability.

21 We want to ensure that SUNY's infrastructure
22 of the public buildings, 40 percent of the public
23 buildings in New York State that we own and operate,
24 are sustainable.

25 Because SUNY is such a large part of

1 New York's public infrastructure, it really is the
2 case that investing in making SUNY more sustainable
3 is a real investment in making New York State more
4 sustainable.

5 And given how much of a priority offsetting
6 New York State's carbon footprint has been for the
7 Legislature and the Governor, we think an
8 appropriate way to invest in a carbon-free future is
9 by investing in a carbon-free SUNY right now.

10 We can foster that sort of sustainability
11 development, we can foster that kind of world-class
12 infrastructure, through sustained five-year capital
13 plans that offer predictability in terms of funding
14 for projects.

15 We recently, on the SUNY Board of Trustees,
16 passed our budget request to the State, which calls
17 for a \$100 million increase in critical maintenance
18 funding, and \$200 million for new projects which
19 will be matched by private philanthropy.

20 I was proud to vote in support of that
21 capital budget because I think that increased
22 investment can really go to enhance the experience
23 that students have on their campuses.

24 We can't wait another year for this kind of
25 funding.

1 We need to start SUNY on the track to having
2 the kind of infrastructure that attracts talented
3 students, that attracts students from all walks of
4 life, to our campuses and offers them an affordable,
5 high-quality degree.

6 And I urge the Senate Higher Education
7 Committee to champion the cause of that investment
8 in SUNY throughout the legislative session.

9 Thank you.

10 SENATOR STAVISKY: Who wants to go next?
11 Tim?

12 SAKIA FLETCHER: Hello, good afternoon.

13 SENATOR STAVISKY: Okay.

14 SAKIA FLETCHER: Thank you, Senators, for
15 having us today.

16 I just want to say, thank you for just
17 holding these hearings, and really getting to really
18 let the students tell their point of view.

19 And also want to thank Tim and USS, the
20 leadership -- student leadership, for continuing to
21 advocate on behalf of students on CUNY students.

22 So my name is Sakia Fletcher. I am the SGA
23 president of Medgar Evers College.

24 Medgar Evers College is the only HBCU senior
25 college in CUNY. It is located in Central Brooklyn,

1 Crown Heights.

2 The student population is 86 percent
3 African-Americans; 73 percent female; 43 percent
4 female, single-parent households, head of
5 households.

6 80 to 83 percent of the student population
7 lives below the poverty line. And the remainder of
8 the student populations are considered working poor;
9 individuals living paycheck to paycheck.

10 Medgar Evers College -- Medgar Evers College
11 students, like myself, represent a disenfranchised
12 minority student population who have attended a
13 corrupt and segregated K through 12 grade
14 New York City Board of Education public school
15 system.

16 After completing high school, those same
17 disenfranchised students now enter into Medgar Evers
18 College.

19 Upon entering, it becomes evident very
20 quickly that educational segregation also exists in
21 the CUNY system.

22 This is evident by the second-rate
23 infrastructural consistence -- conditions, or lack
24 thereof, in comparisons to other CUNY college
25 campuses.

1 Medgar Evers College is the only public
2 college in CUNY that utilizes -- that utilizes
3 portable trailers due to lack of classroom space.

4 So I know some of you ask: What is "portable
5 classroom trailers"?

6 By way of Google.com, "portable classroom
7 trailers" are demountable, relocatable classroom
8 portables.

9 And it is a type of building installed at a
10 school to temporarily and quickly provide additional
11 classroom space where there is a shortage of
12 capacity.

13 On the other hand, what are portable
14 classroom trailers by way of Medgar Evers College
15 students?

16 Portable classroom trailers are too hot, too
17 cold, the temperature is never quite right;
18 uncomfortable, ugly, despicable, degrading, inferior
19 box infrastructures that, unfortunately, both
20 high school and college students have to take
21 classes in.

22 More importantly, what do these
23 portable-trailers classrooms represent?

24 They represent 20 years of disappointment and
25 failure; failed leadership from the president of our

1 college who neglects opportunities to campaign and
2 acquire new building space, as well as seek capital
3 investments to build new college infrastructures.

4 These portable classroom trailers represents
5 lying elected officials who say they care about
6 Medgar Evers College students in their district;
7 however, when given the opportunity to transform
8 Bedford -- Brooklyn Bedford Armory public land into
9 permanent new classroom -- new classroom and
10 educational infrastructures, instead, they approve
11 for this land to be privatized.

12 These portable classroom trailers represents
13 educational racism and segregation that still exists
14 in CUNY.

15 They remind students of color that the City
16 is not willing to invest in educational
17 infrastructure expansion for Black students.

18 Ultimately, the Medgar Evers College
19 students' classroom portable trailers represents the
20 State's blatant disregard and neglect in funding
21 capital projects and new infrastructure investments
22 at predominantly Black institutions in
23 New York State.

24 So what is the impact of portable classroom
25 trailers at Medgar Evers College?

1 The impact is a legacy of caged dreams and
2 hopes.

3 For Medgar Evers College students who have
4 classes in portables, they internalize an
5 inferiority complex that reminds us that it doesn't
6 matter if you made it to college, but you're still
7 not quite good enough.

8 Sorry, sorry.

9 SENATOR STAVISKY: That's okay.

10 SAKIA FLETCHER: The portable classrooms,
11 they whisper in my ear every day that I have classes
12 there:

13 Kia, you're too cold.

14 Kia, you're too hot.

15 Kia, the temperature is never quite right.

16 You're uncomfortable.

17 You're ugly.

18 You're despicable.

19 You're degrading.

20 You're inferior.

21 And no matter how hard you try to get out,
22 you will remain in a boxed-cage infrastructure.

23 But God, I am here.

24 I am here today, as a woman on a mission, to
25 once and for all, eradicate portable classroom

1 trailers at Medgar Evers College, but I need your
2 assistance.

3 The legacy of hope is tied to your capital
4 investments.

5 The ideals of academic empowerment is
6 connected to you approving new campus
7 infrastructures at Medgar Evers College.

8 And, finally, ladies and gentlemen, if you
9 approve to end the use of portable classroom
10 trailers at my college, it will lead us down the
11 path of social justice for past, present, and future
12 Medgar Evers College students.

13 Thank you.

14 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

15 I suspect you're preaching to the converted,
16 but, nevertheless, we thank you, and we will send
17 that message.

18 Who wants to go next?

19 FAY YANOFSKY: I'll go next.

20 Good afternoon.

21 My name is Fay Yanofsky, and I'm the Brooklyn
22 College main delegate to the University Student
23 Senate and the vice chair of fiscal affairs.

24 We greatly appreciate that you will be
25 listening to our concerns in addressing capital

1 improvements in the proposed budget.

2 We have not received money from the State
3 since 2013, and I will be dedicating the rest of my
4 time today to showcase some photos of what's been
5 going on around the CUNY campuses.

6 So some of those photos include mold, pipes,
7 open wires, a broken sidewalk and its effects on
8 wheelchairs, a broken elevator, and notice of
9 asbestos.

10 So this photo right here -- can you see
11 that? -- has -- it's a ceiling tile. And it
12 demonstrates a ceiling with mold all over it.

13 So this is from Brooklyn College.

14 See that photo?

15 Okay.

16 This photo demonstrates a broken ceiling,
17 with pipes and wires really bursting -- bursting
18 outside of the ceiling. And this is from
19 Brooklyn College as well.

20 This photo demonstrates wires that are just
21 completely open, and this is from City College.

22 This photo was taken in Queens College. What
23 happened was, there was a broken sidewalk, and then
24 a wheelchair got stuck in the sidewalk. So the
25 wheel -- the wheel was broken by the broken

1 sidewalk, right there.

2 Here in Brooklyn College we have a broken
3 elevator, so sometimes it opens, and sometimes it
4 closes like this.

5 Here at Queensboro Community College, and
6 these notices often do go up in other colleges as
7 well, there is a notice of asbestos abatement.

8 So that is from Queensboro Community College.

9 This photo from Brooklyn College demonstrates
10 that the wall is kind of falling apart at the bottom
11 of it, if you see that right there?

12 SENATOR STAVISKY: Go back to the Queensboro
13 asbestos abatement.

14 FAY YANOFISKY: Yes.

15 SENATOR STAVISKY: Have they encapsulated the
16 area so that, the asbestos, has it been cordoned off
17 with tape -- with canvas -- those big sheets of
18 canvas that they put down?

19 FAY YANOFISKY: So we don't know.

20 When these signs go up, so we had these signs
21 up at Brooklyn College as well, and I'm sure they're
22 everywhere.

23 SENATOR STAVISKY: Because asbestos is
24 different.

25 FAY YANOFISKY: Yes, I agree.

1 SENATOR STAVISKY: Asbestos, when it's
2 exposed, is very dangerous.

3 FAY YANOFISKY: Yes, so --

4 SENATOR STAVISKY: And you don't know it.
5 When it's friable, it's very dangerous.

6 FAY YANOFISKY: So this is really, when we see
7 signs like this --

8 SENATOR STAVISKY: That happens to be in my
9 district.

10 FAY YANOFISKY: Right.

11 SENATOR STAVISKY: And believe me --

12 FAY YANOFISKY: Queensboro --

13 SENATOR STAVISKY: -- I will call and find
14 out the status of that asbestos.

15 FAY YANOFISKY: -- and when these signs go up,
16 it's really scary, because these are really
17 health -- health issues as well.

18 So -- you know, asbestos, I was looking it
19 up, it causes cancer, things like that.

20 So people should not be risking their health
21 by going to school.

22 So that's why it's important to share that
23 one.

24 This Brooklyn College photo represents the
25 wall, the wall just falling apart.

1 At Brooklyn College as well, we have some
2 bathrooms with no water. They got the -- the -- the
3 yellow caution tape, saying it's broken, so we can't
4 come into that.

5 And then just some, at Brooklyn as well,
6 we've got the ceiling just falling apart, crumbling.

7 So I just wanted to provide today a visual
8 representation of some of the things that students
9 see as an experience on the day-to-day, because a
10 picture is really worth a thousand words.

11 And we appreciate that you're taking the time
12 for capital improvements.

13 I know that, originally, the Maintenance of
14 Effort Bill was 3 billion, but we're transitioning
15 to capital improvements.

16 But, like I previously have stated before,
17 the Amazon deal, the \$3 billion did not go through,
18 and they came anyways.

19 So that money is really, we believe, on the
20 table for us.

21 So we would really appreciate if we can have
22 some investments in our schools.

23 So I want to say thank you very much for
24 listening, and for the opportunity to testify and
25 represent the students.

1 Thank you.

2 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

3 Tim.

4 TIMOTHY HUNTER: So, first, I would just like
5 to take the time out to just say a special thank you
6 to all those who came out, especially the student
7 leaders that I have here to my right, and to my left
8 coming from SUNY.

9 But these -- these two women that I have next
10 to me, in my opinion, are some of the most
11 passionate student leaders that we have in CUNY.
12 And I think that they -- they are just living
13 representation of, like, our current, you know,
14 like, status here.

15 Like, you have students that are trying to
16 take this university and use it to make the best of
17 themselves. But, unfortunately, because of, like,
18 the current learning conditions that we're in, it's
19 kind of hard to do that, when you have, like, you
20 know, notice of asbestos all over.

21 I have it on my campus.

22 I'm pretty sure Brooklyn College has it,
23 Queensboro has it.

24 It's, pretty much, all over.

25 And, you know, when -- even you just

1 mentioning that things are supposed to be covered
2 up.

3 Like, you know, things like that --

4 SENATOR STAVISKY: More than just covered up.

5 TIMOTHY HUNTER: It's supposed to be sealed
6 off; right?

7 SENATOR STAVISKY: "Encapsulated" is the
8 word.

9 TIMOTHY HUNTER: Yeah, that, I didn't know.

10 I mean, I walk out of the building and I see
11 the sign every day.

12 And since I see it on so many campuses, like,
13 it's just, like, second-nature things.

14 You know, like, you just think that, this is
15 the norm that we experience here.

16 And it's kind of sad that that has become the
17 norm.

18 I mean, you look at someone like
19 Medgar Evers, (indiscernible) who was, like, a
20 leader in the Civil Rights Movement, who they named
21 this college after in CUNY, a public school, meant
22 to, kind of, like, you know, take us to the next
23 socioeconomic level, and it seems as if, like, those
24 students are, like, now not receiving what I think
25 Medgar Evers would want them to receive here,

1 because of the horrendous things that they've been
2 having to go through on a regular basis.

3 I think that, especially as we look at the
4 portable trailers, which, me, as a high school
5 student, I actually -- no, sorry, in middle school,
6 I actually did a STEM program in these portable
7 trailers.

8 This is, like, six, seven years ago, and
9 they're still there.

10 You know, and, like, just knowing that, you
11 know, and know, having my mom be a graduate of that
12 same school as well, like, I have my own personal
13 ties to Medgar. And knowing that, like, you know,
14 they go through these things on a regular basis, and
15 in my opinion, it's really disheartening.

16 They also -- I'm not sure if you noticed, and
17 I think Sakia didn't mention in their testimony,
18 there's actually a homeless shelter as well, right
19 next to the school.

20 So, you know, like, it's just the amount of
21 things that you're going through on a daily basis,
22 just thinking, this is a public higher-education
23 institution, and that you're going to go and receive
24 the education that you need to, like, succeed, and
25 you're not receiving it.

1 One thing that wasn't brought up yet was also
2 York's Performing Arts Center.

3 I'm not sure if you all are aware of what
4 happened there, but, they had to shut down the whole
5 entire building due to mold.

6 And, Jumani Williams just did a walk-through
7 of York the other day, witnessed student
8 government's funding computer labs, when the student
9 government's, like, you know, like -- like,
10 literally, libraries were like -- like empty book
11 shelves.

12 All these things that happened, like York
13 doesn't even have a cafeteria right now.

14 And I know that's not capital budget-related,
15 but you just looking at all these things, and that's
16 not something you see in a report, with a bunch of
17 numbers.

18 All you see is what they're gonna do. You
19 don't see what's happening currently.

20 So we, as the students, are always going to
21 come out and let you know what we're living as our
22 reality, because we know you guys are in Albany,
23 you're in your districts. It's hard to take a
24 walk-through of all these schools on a daily basis.

25 But I just want to, like, you know, applaud

1 Senator Stavisky and Senator Jackson for making
2 these rounds and these public hearings.

3 But I think the next step is, taking a look
4 at the colleges themselves, and doing a walk-through
5 there, just trying to identify exactly what these
6 problems are, because we've noticed that, like, you
7 know, we have these huge class sizes.

8 You know, we have, like, you know, one
9 professor, or even an adjunct in some case, that
10 isn't getting paid adequately teaching these
11 classes.

12 And not only that, you're dealing with a
13 leaky ceiling. Or, you're going to the bathroom,
14 and then, like, at a place like CSI, I think that
15 they're on the process of fixing it now, but there's
16 no hot water. They only have cold water.

17 And then you're seeing all these other things
18 that are happening, and it makes you really
19 question, like, in a public higher education, like a
20 university, this is what we're going to have to deal
21 with just to get the adequate education that we
22 need, is this really something that -- that I should
23 be dealing with?

24 Right?

25 Like, people are taking out loans, and

1 leaving.

2 And we're here, trying to, like, make the
3 best of a bad situation. And it seems like there's
4 just no help.

5 You know, and I know that, like,
6 Senator Stavisky said, we're preaching to the choir
7 here. But I think that there are some other people
8 that need to be converted; there's other senators
9 and Assembly members that need to hear these things,
10 and they need to see them for themselves.

11 I just want to, like, you know, like, those
12 senators that did come out to the hearings, and some
13 of the Assembly members, that stayed and they
14 listened to the students, I applaud them for being
15 the champions.

16 But like, you know, Barbara Bowen had said,
17 like, you know, it's up to you all to also let
18 leadership know, because, to my knowledge,
19 leadership went in the room with the Governor, and
20 that's what happens at the end of every single
21 executive session. And sometimes they come out and
22 it seems like higher education isn't always there
23 when they come out.

24 And I think that that's just something that
25 we have to rectify.

1 Let's take them.

2 I have no problem giving them a tour of a
3 CUNY school, and I'm sure Austin has no problem
4 giving them a tour of a SUNY school, and letting
5 them see what exactly these learning conditions is
6 like.

7 'Cause, you know, Albert Einstein once said,
8 he's, like, I never -- he never teaches his pupils.
9 He provides the conditions in which they learn.

10 So, is this the conditions that the State
11 wants to provide for their students?

12 We just talked about two senior colleges, one
13 that has trailers, and another one that had a
14 building shut down due to mold.

15 Which, to my knowledge, the State -- you
16 know, I think the State's, pretty much, I think what
17 Barbara said, (indiscernible) 50 percent, I think,
18 the State's handling of the capital budget there.

19 Is this the learning conditions that we want
20 to provide for our students?

21 Right?

22 Is this the narrative that we want to set?

23 Because it's not a narrative that's just this
24 year.

25 We're talking about, like, you know, maybe

1 your children, or your grandchildren, or our
2 grandchildren, experiencing this, like, you know,
3 type of university that we're in.

4 And, again, I think that, you know, I am like
5 nothing without this team that we have here.

6 Fay just came on, like, a couple weeks ago,
7 and she's been doing an amazing job.

8 She just put together our whole budget for
9 the year, and now she's here testifying.

10 This is her second time testifying.

11 She testified in front of Senator Gounardes,
12 Senator Salazar, two great, in my opinion, champions
13 for us as well.

14 And I think that the next step is just having
15 another meeting with all of us, you know, all the
16 stakeholders -- the students, the faculty --
17 figuring out what it is that the priority should be.

18 And, you know, these hearings are great
19 because we get a chance to voice our concerns, but
20 we don't want the buck to stop here.

21 We want to be really involved in everything
22 that's going on.

23 If there's anything that you think we should
24 be doing, I'd appreciate, like, you know, an e-mail
25 or, anything, to let us know, because we're the

1 students and we can organize as well.

2 So, you know, we appreciate what's been
3 going.

4 Of course, we can always do more.

5 And I just hope that, in the future, we can
6 continue to be champions for our public higher
7 education across the state.

8 So thank you so much for your time.

9 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you for coming
10 again.

11 Let's hope that we celebrate in the future,
12 rather -- I hope this is the last hearing we have to
13 hold, let's put it that way.

14 Okay.

15 Thank you.

16 SENATOR JACKSON: No, I just wanted to ask a
17 couple of questions, if you don't mind.

18 SENATOR STAVISKY: Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

19 SENATOR JACKSON: That's okay.

20 So -- so I thank you all for coming in,
21 representing.

22 Now, you indicated your campus.

23 What school do you attend?

24 TIMOTHY HUNTER: Sorry, I didn't even
25 introduce myself.

1 I go to New York City College of Technology,
2 so that's downtown. But we actually just got a new
3 building, actually.

4 SENATOR JACKSON: Is that in downtown
5 Brooklyn?

6 TIMOTHY HUNTER: Yeah, and I'm not sure if
7 you guys have seen it yet, there's a new building
8 that we have there.

9 And I apologize if I'm going back into a
10 testimony here, but I think that, looking at that
11 building --

12 Which, it used to be another building before.
13 They had, like, completely tore it down and they
14 rebuilt it up.

15 -- I see firsthand the impact that a new
16 building can have on a -- on a -- at a college.

17 What I mean by that is, all of our labs and
18 everything were completely outdated.

19 And I'm pretty sure Senator Stavisky and
20 Senator Jackson have heard about, like, you know,
21 probably President Hotzler come to speak to you all,
22 to try to secure that new building, secure funding
23 for it.

24 They finally secured it, and even though,
25 like, it took us like, what, 15 years or so, they

1 finally got the building up. And now we have all of
2 our, like, labs, and everything, it's completely
3 like a new STEM building, with labs, dental hygiene,
4 radiology technology.

5 So, like, it gives the colleges an
6 opportunity to now, like, you know, push in the
7 direction of STEM, and create, like, you know,
8 fields and jobs, that they're getting them like the
9 most high high-tech technology, and they can get a
10 chance to use that, to better the infrastructure and
11 the economy of New York, and the whole state of
12 New York.

13 I (indiscernible) -- I'm pretty sure next
14 time you get your teeth cleaned, or next time you
15 get an X-ray, you ask that -- that, you know,
16 radiologist, where they graduated from, and I can
17 guarantee you, the person graduated from the
18 New York City College of Technology -- right? --
19 because this is an opportunity to kind of create the
20 workforce of tomorrow here.

21 And the minute that we're not, kind of, like,
22 providing that -- like, you know, that opportunity
23 for them, they're not gonna get that opportunity to
24 succeed in the future.

25 However, we do have other buildings.

1 I think Voorhees building as well.

2 We have, I think, five of them.

3 One of them we're renting out, we're renting
4 out a whole floor. So the college is spending money
5 to, kind of, like, rent.

6 And this is happening in other places, like
7 Guttman Community College, they're actually paying
8 money to a private, like, whoever owns the building,
9 to rent it out.

10 So we're using taxpayer dollars to put
11 students in a place to learn.

12 Like, that, in my opinion, is crazy too.

13 And, again, I'm sorry if I'm, like, rambling
14 a little bit.

15 But then, also, we have Voorhees building,
16 which used to be a bomb shelter, to my knowledge.
17 And now we have, like, students, our architecture
18 majors and civil-engineering majors there.

19 And we have our Nam building, which has the
20 asbestos abatement, that's right on the door.

21 I think when I leave out the side entrance on
22 Johnson Street, that's when I usually see it, the
23 sign, it's right there.

24 But, you know, I think that's pretty much it.

25 And they're, kind of, like, revamping some of

1 it.

2 But those are all, like, small tweaks and
3 fixes that don't stop the operational problems that
4 we're still dealing with on a regular basis as well.

5 And even though we're here talking about
6 capital budgets, some of these problems are
7 operational, that we also need to take a look at,
8 you know.

9 But I think that that's, you know, when you
10 all get into your conference and your session, when
11 you talk about those things, but I think that it's
12 something that we can't overlook.

13 SENATOR JACKSON: Well, I want to thank you
14 for -- you weren't rambling. You were giving us
15 details that I didn't know about.

16 So, I'm aware of that.

17 And the more information and knowledge that
18 I have, then, in the various forums, whether it's in
19 conference, or anywhere else, I can communicate from
20 the position of being at a hearing where the student
21 assembly leaders gave testimony, and that's very,
22 very important.

23 One of the things that I would recommend, for
24 all of the student leaders around every campus, is
25 to document, with photographs, dates, and things

1 like that, and then present those to the -- either
2 the Senate and Assembly members for that area, so
3 they will have that, so they can look at that and
4 see the situation.

5 Because, one thing is saying it, and another
6 thing is saying it, somebody hearing you, and also
7 seeing also.

8 And then to be able to take that, either to
9 the Assembly, or when they're discussing in
10 conference, about capital money, they can say, you
11 know, look at -- look at the situation that exists.

12 And actually show them like you showed us.

13 And so they may not know this from a visual
14 point of view, you know, and they may not have heard
15 it, but they can actually see it.

16 So that's very important.

17 So I would recommend, SUNY President and
18 CUNY Chair, that all of your campuses document
19 everything --

20 SENATOR STAVISKY: That's a really good idea.

21 SENATOR JACKSON: -- dates and times and
22 pictures.

23 And, also, as far as, at New York Tech, you
24 say you're leasing space?

25 TIMOTHY HUNTER: Yeah.

1 SENATOR JACKSON: Find out what type of space
2 you're leasing, and how much does it cost.

3 (Inaudible witness speaking.)

4 SENATOR JACKSON: Yeah, I know.

5 Document that, and how much are you leasing
6 it for.

7 Is it for a 5-year lease, a 10-year lease, a
8 20-year lease, or 1-year lease? Or -- and how much
9 does it cost to leasing it every year?

10 So let's assume the cost, like, over the
11 course of 10 years, \$15 million.

12 Okay, how much does it cost to build a
13 building?

14 Why can't we then invest in that?

15 Because, you know, when you're talking about
16 capital, you're talking about long-term investment.

17 So, to all of you, that's important.

18 I would think part of each campus leader
19 should document that.

20 And, Sakia, so, you were very emotional, and
21 you shed tears, at speaking about your campus and
22 the situation that exists.

23 And you had said in your opening statement,
24 that 86 percent of the students are Black.

25 And looking at your testimony, it says

1 96 percent.

2 Which one is it: 86 or 96?

3 SAKIA FLETCHER: It's -- I re-edit it.

4 It's actually 96.

5 SENATOR JACKSON: 96?

6 SAKIA FLETCHER: Yes, it is.

7 SENATOR JACKSON: And I'd say to you, that,
8 part of the lawsuit that we filed on behalf of the
9 children of New York City, part of the agreement
10 was, that they would get rid of trailers, all of the
11 trailers in the New York City public school system.

12 And I say to you that, I believe, even as of
13 today, there are certain schools that still have
14 trailers in the yards.

15 I know, at George Washington High School
16 campus, those trailers are being used now in the
17 yard by a charter school.

18 But I had -- I took exception to when you
19 said that, and I'll read this, "Medgar Evers College
20 students, like myself, represent a disenfranchised
21 minority student population who have attended."

22 Now, I don't disagree with anything you said
23 just then.

24 You attended a corrupt and segregated K to 12
25 grade in New York City Department of Education.

1 I agree that the schools are segregated,
2 based on ZIP code and where you live. And even
3 reports have said that.

4 I don't necessarily agree with being corrupt,
5 so I take exception to that.

6 I think that some of the leaders in our
7 education systems may not make the best decisions
8 that you would make.

9 And if any of them are corrupt, then they
10 should go to jail, and charges need to be brought
11 about that corruption.

12 So, I somewhat take exception to that.

13 But, (indiscernible) you're feeling it,
14 you're there, and so this is how you feel.

15 And I accept how you feel even though
16 I disagree with that aspect.

17 And then, when that same page says, "These
18 portable classroom trailers represent lying elected
19 officials," I would hope that your elected officials
20 that represent you are not lying, because, if they
21 lie, you can then counter that with facts, or, as
22 you know, these days, you know, so many people are
23 on videotape or audiotape.

24 And so you say, No, you're lying. This is
25 what you said. Here, listen to it yourself.

1 But I hope that your elected officials are
2 not lying.

3 I do believe, based on everything that
4 I know, that Zellnor Myrie is the state senator for
5 your area.

6 And let me say this to you: I think that
7 he's working very, very hard, on many fronts, to
8 represent you and the people of your area, based on
9 my personal knowledge of being with him and working
10 with him.

11 And I think you have an excellent
12 representative in Zellnor Myrie from a state Senate
13 point of view.

14 And maybe you were -- maybe you were also
15 maybe very happy, or not happy, with the
16 representative before him.

17 But the bottom line is, as you know, in 2018,
18 the voters decided a change needed to happen.

19 And it happened, regardless.

20 And that not only happened in where you are,
21 but it happened in my area, and four other areas.

22 So, where people feel that a change needs to
23 happen, they make the change by voting people out of
24 office, if necessary.

25 So -- and I -- I -- believe me, I understand

1 your situation.

2 I say to you:

3 I went to SUNY New Paltz under the EOP
4 program (the Educational Opportunity Program).

5 My family, I grew up poor, family of nine on
6 welfare, which they now call "social services."

7 I remember coming home on weekends, and there
8 were no heat and hot water, and we had to sleep in
9 all of our clothes.

10 And I said to mom and my brothers and
11 sisters, I'm sorry, I'm going back to school where
12 there's some heat.

13 So I understand some of the situations, as
14 far as rodents in the apartments, and roaches, and
15 all of that type of stuff.

16 And that's not the environment that should be
17 for anyone.

18 And we have to work hard to make sure.

19 So when you were talking about the education
20 conditions at Medgar Evers, I was thinking about
21 children in Mozambique, and other countries, and
22 seeing, 60, 70 students in a classroom, sitting on
23 the floor with whatever books that they have.

24 And you know one thing?

25 You got to fight to get a good education.

1 You gotta fight, and don't give up.
2 And so get involved in the political process.
3 And one of the thing I ask all of you to do,
4 is to make sure that all of your students know who
5 their elected public officials are.
6 I was at a union meeting --
7 I'm not going to say which union, it doesn't
8 really matter.
9 -- a political action, and I asked them, How
10 many of you know who your elected public officials
11 are? Raise your hand.
12 And in the room, not everyone raised their
13 hand.
14 Maybe, let's say, half raised their hand.
15 So I told them, and all of them in
16 New York City: Go to lwvnyc.org (the League of
17 Women Voters New York City dot org), and put in your
18 address, and you will get to see, by the picture,
19 who your representatives are at the local, state,
20 and federal level, and, also, where their offices
21 are located.
22 And that's very important from a
23 political-power point of view, as far as,
24 constituents, you know, knowing who their
25 representatives are, writing to them, e-mailing to

1 them, going to their office, and pushing them to do
2 the right thing.

3 Is that right, Josh?

4 JOSH: Happy birthday, Senator.

5 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you.

6 So I want to thank you all for coming in.

7 The documentation is very important.

8 So, pictures, just like you did there.

9 Okay?

10 Thank you.

11 God bless you.

12 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

13 And thank you, Senator Jackson, for your
14 comments.

15 I've got to stand up for a second.

16 SENATOR JACKSON: Stand up for a minute?

17 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yeah.

18 SENATOR JACKSON: We're going to stand up and
19 stretch for minute, I hope you don't mind.

20 SENATOR STAVISKY: Oh, I should call the
21 next --

22 SENATOR JACKSON: The next panel?

23 SENATOR STAVISKY: -- the next panel.

24 Mary Beth Labate, president of CICU;

25 Charles Kruzansky, assistant vice president

1 for Governmental -- Government Relations, Cornell;

2 And Cecil Scheib, chief sustainability
3 officer, NYU.

4 SENATOR JACKSON: Toby, can you give me
5 two minutes?

6 SENATOR STAVISKY: Sure.

7 We'll take a two-minute.

8 (The hearing stands in recess.)

9 (The hearing resumes, as follows:)

10 SENATOR STAVISKY: Okay, the first person on
11 this panel is --

12 There's one brief panel after this, and then
13 we will adjourn.

14 -- the Commission on Independent Colleges and
15 Universities, Mary Beth Labate.

16 And let me thank you for coming, and for your
17 guidance over the years, answering my questions, and
18 so on.

19 The same is true of our other panelists, but
20 I appreciate your help.

21 MARY BETH LABATE: Certainly.

22 Thank you.

23 Thank you, Chairperson Stavisky, and
24 Senator Jackson, and thank you for giving me this
25 opportunity to speak on behalf of New York's

1 100-plus private not-for-profit colleges and
2 universities.

3 I'm happy to be joined by my colleagues from
4 Cornell and NYU, two institutions that are on the
5 cutting-age -- -edge of infrastructure
6 sustainability.

7 Higher ed, as you know, in New York is really
8 part of a -- is a three-legged stool, with private
9 not-for-profit colleges working hand in hand with
10 SUNY and CUNY to offer students a diversity of
11 experiences and choices unprecedented in
12 higher-education arena, globally.

13 Educating 40 percent of college students
14 in -- in the state each year, nearly four --
15 500,000 students, and awarding 50 percent of
16 bachelor's degrees, private not-for-profit colleges
17 and universities are a critical part of the
18 equation.

19 And we are also an immense contributor to the
20 economy of the state.

21 We generate \$88.8 billion in economic
22 activity annually, and support more than
23 415,000 jobs, almost half of them in New York City.

24 Construction spending by private
25 not-for-profit colleges and universities totaled

1 about 2.2 billion in 2018.

2 Because we are such a major player in
3 educating the students that you care about and the
4 workforce that our employers demand, I am
5 particularly grateful to be here to talk about -- to
6 take part in the important conversation regarding
7 capital investment and sustainability.

8 Our campuses are at the forefront of research
9 into sustainability and the environment.

10 In every corner of the state, our campuses
11 are engaged in groundbreaking research, without
12 which our shared goal of reducing the global carbon
13 footprint simply would not be possible.

14 One way this research manifests itself is
15 through the State-supported Centers of Excellence,
16 and Centers for Advanced Technology, better known as
17 "CATS."

18 Five private-college campuses, Rensselaer
19 Polytechnical Institute, Clarkson, Cornell, RIT, and
20 Senator Stavisky's alma mater Syracuse, operate
21 facilities with a sustainability focus.

22 Existing state support for CATS and COEs
23 helps to support New York being on the cutting-edge
24 of carbon reduction, but it's, frankly, insufficient
25 to keep pace with the demand for research and the

1 services that these centers receive each year.

2 We -- the only way to make ourselves more
3 carbon neutral is to bring technologies to the
4 forefront.

5 And our schools are at the forefront of
6 developing those technologies.

7 And programs that you support, like CATS and
8 COEs, are vital to that.

9 At the same time, we educate the
10 environmental and sustainability problem-solvers of
11 the future.

12 38 of our members offer degrees in
13 environmental science, environmental engineering,
14 conservation, and related fields.

15 The work that is being done on our campuses
16 is helping to lead the global conversation.

17 Buildings, old and new, on our campuses
18 present a huge opportunity for carbon and waste
19 reduction.

20 Private colleges have a commitment to invest
21 in greener infrastructure, replacing or
22 rehabilitating old, inefficient buildings to, meet
23 today's and tomorrow's environmental standards.

24 I'd like to share just a very small sampling
25 of the types of things that are going on on some of

1 our CICU-member campuses. It's by no means
2 exhaustive.

3 Colgate University became the first
4 institution of higher education in New York State to
5 achieve carbon neutrality. It was the culmination
6 over a decade of work.

7 Wagner College on Staten Island has taken
8 funds from the state's higher-education capital
9 assistance (HECap) program to build a new facility.
10 The facility will feature state-of-the-art glass and
11 geothermal technology to heat and cool the building
12 without carbon emission.

13 Bard College in the Hudson Valley has
14 partnered with Project Drawdown, a research
15 organization, to put 100 comprehensive
16 climate-change solutions into action on the
17 Bard campus and the surrounding area.

18 Fordham University, with campuses both in
19 The Bronx and Manhattan, is one of New York's
20 private colleges that has committed that all new
21 buildings on campus will be designed to stringent
22 LEED environmental standards.

23 Already, Fordham has used funds from the
24 HECap program to help finance the construction of
25 two such buildings.

1 56 CICU members participate in NYSERDA's,
2 which is the state's energy authority, REV Campus
3 Challenge, which promotes clean-energy efforts by
4 recognizing and supporting colleges and universities
5 around New York that implement clean-energy
6 solutions on campus, in the classroom, and in the
7 communities.

8 Recently, CICU signed an MOU with NYSERDA to
9 support sustainability efforts across our sectors.

10 We will be creating an energy committee to
11 help NYSERDA identify best practices and common
12 challenges in the march to reduce carbon -- to
13 achieve carbon reduction and sustainability.

14 So, what can the State do to continue
15 supporting the leadership that is showcased at
16 independent colleges?

17 First, continue supporting the state's
18 Higher Education Capital Assistance Program,
19 better known as "HECap."

20 We know that, in the long term, building
21 green makes sound economic sense and is an
22 environmental imperative, but getting there can be a
23 stretch for the budgets of many of our campuses.

24 HECap helps campuses make investments.

25 HECap has required a 3-to-1 match, prevailing

1 wage, and MWBE standards.

2 Currently, the HECap program receives
3 \$30 million in State funding.

4 The Governor proposed to zero it out in the
5 current-year budget, so we so appreciate your
6 steadfast support in seeing that the funding was
7 restored.

8 We know it was a tough year, and our members
9 were incredibly grateful that you kept HECap on --
10 on your list of priorities.

11 I'll point out, however, that 30 million
12 pales in comparison to the 6.1 billion in new
13 capital appropriation that SUNY and CUNY are slated
14 to receive over the next five years.

15 But, for private colleges that must depend on
16 tuition revenues to maintain its infrastructure,
17 that 30 million is a welcomed and important source
18 of funding.

19 I would argue strongly that a \$30 million
20 investment is a small price to pay to help support a
21 sector that educates more students than either SUNY
22 or CUNY.

23 Second, understanding that one of the biggest
24 barriers to making college campuses more sustainable
25 and environmental friendly is financial.

1 The State should create new funding streams
2 similar to HECap, but focus exclusively on
3 sustainability.

4 Perhaps it's a bond act. Perhaps it's a
5 program using the various revenue streams that are
6 generated through the utilities.

7 But I think, as we're looking to really meet
8 the goals that are -- are -- were established in
9 your very ambitious plan that you put forward, and
10 that you enacted, we will need new forms, all large
11 institutions are going to need new forms, of funding
12 to help.

13 And we encourage that to be part of the
14 discussion in this year's budget.

15 Lastly, I encourage everyone to think
16 holistically.

17 For years, and including in my former life in
18 the state budget division, I heard many requests to
19 build new buildings on our public institutions. And
20 sometimes it's -- and oftentimes it's required.

21 But, before launching into an expensive
22 endeavor, and, particularly, in the face of a
23 \$6 billion deficit, I encourage the State to invest
24 in commonsense partnerships that leverage the
25 existing assets on both public and private campuses.

1 New York State has an amazing asset; they
2 have a strong public system in both SUNY and CUNY,
3 and they also have a strong private system.

4 Let's figure out how we can work together to
5 stretch our dollars further, and ensure our common
6 goal of ensuring that every New Yorker who wants to
7 go to college has a quality experience, whether that
8 is at a public or private institution.

9 And I think, by partnering together, that's
10 how we're going to get there, particularly as the
11 State grapples with a -- a -- one its -- the largest
12 deficits that it's seen in a very long time.

13 With that, I'm going to hand it over to my
14 colleagues.

15 I want to thank you again for allowing us to
16 testify, and really for this forum, and for your
17 commitment to higher education.

18 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

19 And thank you for your service as budget
20 director.

21 MARY BETH LABATE: Thank you.

22 CECIL SCHEIB: Want to take questions
23 individually, or at the end?

24 SENATOR STAVISKY: Let's do all the questions
25 at the end.

1 But let me just say that, I particularly
2 appreciate Mr. Kruzansky, and I've said this many
3 times, but, my father was an immigrant, and, no
4 money, obviously, poor, and with lots of siblings.

5 And he went to what was then the College of
6 Agriculture, and Cornell gave him a free education.
7 And when he graduated, he went to New York
8 University and received a master of science in
9 geology.

10 So, I thank the two institutions for doing
11 what the public colleges have done, although the
12 Cornell experience was at a statutory college.

13 CECIL SCHEIB: Well, thank you very much,
14 Senators.

15 My name is Cecil Scheib. I am the chief
16 sustainability officer at NYU.

17 And I know -- I just can't believe what you
18 all do to sit and listen for all these hearings.

19 I'm going to try to keep my comments
20 interesting, and not just read through the
21 testimony.

22 NYU is truly committed to be one of the
23 greenest urban campuses in the country.

24 Since we started our efforts in 2007, we have
25 cut our carbon -- carbon intensity by 30 percent;

1 so, that's saving about \$15 million a year.

2 And most of the things we did had a one- to
3 four-year payback.

4 This is the -- this is, roughly, equivalent
5 to planting all of Manhattan and all of Brooklyn in
6 forest, that's the carbon that we're saving every
7 year.

8 And I believe the things that we've done can
9 be done by just about any institution. I don't
10 think we did anything magical. I just think we did
11 what's out there already.

12 And I really wanted to thank both you
13 senators for the CLCPA.

14 I know it's sometimes tough to see if things
15 are making an impact, but, right away that started
16 to let us have our thinking evolve, and change our
17 thinking.

18 Once we knew that we could start to rely on
19 the state grid to be cleaner, now we can look at a
20 whole new way about getting rid of fossil fuels, and
21 turning loads over to electric loads and buildings
22 once we can really rely on the state grid being
23 cleaner.

24 So it had an impact right away, and thank
25 you.

1 NYU, as you may know, we're really, you know,
2 like a city in miniature. Right?

3 We have apartment buildings, offices, labs,
4 gyms, street-level retail. We're in multiple
5 boroughs. We have 19 different schools.

6 It's a very complex place, and we're big.

7 NYU by itself is .43 percent of all of
8 New York City building emissions.

9 And if you count our friends and partners up
10 at NYU Langone Health, 1 percent of the city's
11 emissions.

12 Capital projects play a big part of our
13 forward carbon planning.

14 A couple of examples, one in terms of student
15 residences.

16 We had a first-year dorm at Broadway and
17 East 10th Street, when we were able to do it. And
18 this is -- I think, is a special role we can play in
19 higher ed.

20 We have the opportunity to empty out our
21 buildings while we work on them. Let's say, like a
22 student dorm, you can leave it empty for a semester
23 or a summer, at least; whereas, a normal apartment
24 building, that's very hard to do. Right?

25 So we have the chance to go deep.

1 That cut its needs of fossil fuels for
2 heating by 81 percent.

3 Not 8 percent, or 18 percent, cut.

4 An 81 percent cut in its need of fossil fuels
5 for heating. It's also just a lot more comfortable.

6 In terms of academic buildings, 370 Jay,
7 which is the former MTA headquarters in downtown
8 Brooklyn, instead of ripping off the facade or
9 tearing down the building and putting up a whole new
10 thing, we were able to keep the existing facade, but
11 carefully air seal the windows. So that building is
12 tight, and it's comfortable, and quiet.

13 We have studios in there for music study and
14 recording. They really love that it's quiet.

15 And it's saving the same energy it would if
16 it were brand new, but you save all that carbon that
17 comes from the construction of redoing the whole
18 facade.

19 And so -- and I think that actually saved us
20 money. Right?

21 There's a common misconception that, you
22 know, to be green, it's going to cost green.

23 And I think it's important to look very
24 carefully at how these things are done.

25 If you look at it right, you can get a -- you

1 can get a great building and not spend more money.

2 But often it does, or, even, you know, the
3 capital costs of any building are high.

4 And we thank our partners at the -- DASNY,
5 you know, dormitory authority, for their ongoing
6 effort.

7 We also subscribe to the LEED standard for
8 all new construction.

9 And, with DASNY, we were recently able to
10 release a green bond for the building at 370 Jay,
11 and other LEED-certified projects.

12 And it's great to see, sort of, the broader,
13 you know, community say, like, yeah, we want to
14 invest in a greener building.

15 We know this is a better bet for the future,
16 and it's what our world needs. And it lets us, sort
17 of, expand the pool of people that we can reach out
18 to.

19 NYSERDA, really, you know, an ongoing
20 partner, not just in terms of the execution, but in
21 terms of the planning. And I'll talk more about
22 that.

23 So we've had these great successes that
24 I think have a great business case for our first
25 step, which is the incremental savings -- right? --

1 the 30 percent savings.

2 So our forward goal is a 50 percent overall
3 savings by 2025, and be carbon neutral by 2040. And
4 we're serious about that. We'd like to do it
5 without offsets as much as possible.

6 We're trying to really save the energy on
7 campus, and then use the state's green grid.

8 But, you know, fossil fuels are cheap.

9 Just the energy savings is not necessarily
10 going to pay over time for the capital investment
11 that's going to be required.

12 So the partnership with the State we think is
13 really important.

14 As an example:

15 NYSERDA has a fantastic buildings of
16 excellence program, where they're giving away cash
17 awards to buildings that demonstrate these truly
18 deep energy retrofits.

19 But it's currently only available for certain
20 market sectors. And, basically, higher ed is not
21 eligible.

22 You can't do a commercial building or an
23 academic building, you can't do a student residence
24 or a dorm.

25 That's fine, everyone has to start somewhere,

1 and they targeted some sectors.

2 But we'd love to see that program expand so
3 that we could participate.

4 NYSERDA gives a lot of rebates, which are
5 great, but -- and rebates are great for operational
6 efforts -- right? -- because I can show that on my
7 budget.

8 Hey, I bought some better lighting and we got
9 a rebate for it.

10 So, there we go, you know, that year's, you
11 know, expense budget wasn't so high.

12 But for capital planning, it's tough,
13 because, when you get the rebate, it doesn't
14 necessarily line up with when you need to commit to
15 spending the money.

16 So it would be fantastic for us to have the
17 State looking at grants, lowers your interest at
18 loans, on-bill financing, you know, these things
19 that really align more with how, you know, the
20 capital planning is made.

21 There are some new types of technology that
22 are going to come on that we need to have in order
23 to best use the state green grid and get off of
24 fossil fuels.

25 We've got to go to heat pumps.

1 Well, that's new technology.

2 And so, you know, in addition to them costing
3 more now, and they cost more to operate, because
4 they're more expensive than the fossil fuels, but
5 there's -- also, there's a risk, because they're
6 new.

7 You can see, I got a job to do.

8 And so programs like Recharge New York may be
9 a thread, and that could be, hey, what are you doing
10 in terms of these new technologies, or in terms of
11 energy savings, in terms of carbon savings?

12 You can tell there's a thread here about,
13 look at the existing programs. And the State shows
14 what's important to it by where it puts funding.

15 And I just want to point out that funding
16 from the State serves sort of two different purposes
17 for us.

18 Yes, the money helps, it always helps.

19 But it's a real strong validator, that -- to
20 internal stakeholders.

21 Hey, if the State is putting money on the
22 table, this must be important. And smart people
23 must have looked at it and said, yeah, this is
24 something worth looking into, and we're really
25 encouraging people to do it.

1 So it's quite important to us when the State
2 puts that forward.

3 I'll second Mary Beth's comments about HECap,
4 and maybe a funding stream within HECap, that would
5 support these types of projects that focus on energy
6 emissions or low-carbon projects.

7 And then, finally, just in terms of the
8 renewables, like, it's great that there's a state
9 law that says we'll get to a 70 percent clean grid
10 by 2030, and a fully clean grid by 2040, but,
11 there's a lot, you know, in between here and there.

12 And looking at the offshore wind, looking at
13 the hydropower, and that line, it's we -- you know,
14 we really encourage the State to keep working on
15 that.

16 So, we always look forward to our partnership
17 with the State.

18 Our faculty are very involved with looking at
19 what can be done, everything, from the technical
20 perspective, to, like, the regulatory perspective.

21 We'd love to share what we're doing with
22 other institutions, you know, including CUNY and
23 SUNY; how can we share our things?

24 And, actually, I'll say one thing:

25 There was a lot of comments earlier about

1 freezing, and the leaks that come from freezing.

2 And just a reminder that, when you better
3 insulate a building, it doesn't just make it more
4 comfortable, it doesn't just save energy, but it
5 reduces your risk of freezing of pipes, which is a
6 huge cost, and huge disruption, to the academic
7 effort.

8 So looking for those synergies, and way one
9 project can, sort of, pay back, you know, in several
10 different ways.

11 But these people don't really talk to each
12 other. Right?

13 You know, like, the insurance person who pays
14 for the frozen pipes isn't looking at the energy
15 budget.

16 So just part of what you need to do is get
17 everyone in the same room to really look at all the
18 savings.

19 So we look forward to helping.

20 And, if you have any questions, I'd be happy
21 to answer.

22 SENATOR STAVISKY: Mr. Kruzansky.

23 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: Hello, there.

24 Thanks for having us.

25 SENATOR STAVISKY: How are you?

1 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: Good.

2 Senators, just the -- first, the big applause
3 for the climate bill.

4 It's been said, that really sets the table so
5 that we can know that the grid will be cleaner, but,
6 also, we know that things will be rolled out to help
7 us get to where we want to be.

8 We at Cornell, by 2035, we're serious about
9 being carbon neutral, so we're a little bit ahead of
10 the State's goals. We're actually halfway there,
11 counting from where we started.

12 So we've made a lot of progress, but, the
13 hard part is now. You know, the second half is much
14 harder to achieve than the first half.

15 The student panel was so impressive, and it
16 reminds me to talk about, that's why -- that's the
17 business we're in: students.

18 And Mary Beth said it, you know, our faculty
19 and our students, that's the future. They'll be
20 helping solve these problems.

21 I'll mention just four -- it's in my
22 testimony, a few of them -- some Cornell grads that
23 are, sort of, big in this -- in this realm.

24 So, Willis Carrier was an engineering student
25 at Cornell. He invented the air conditioner. He

1 installed the first one in Brooklyn in 1802.

2 Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Cornell grad,
3 environmental decisions, the Supreme Court as a
4 federal judge.

5 Bill Nye, "The Science Guy," is the -- one of
6 the most -- the most, sort of, accurate proponents
7 of climate change and the effects of it, he's an
8 engineering grad at Cornell as well.

9 And U.S. Senator Ed Muskie, who is the author
10 of the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act,
11 sponsored both bills.

12 So what's happening at our campuses today are
13 affecting these students.

14 We don't know who is going to go where, but
15 they're -- these are their formative years, they'll
16 be at our campuses.

17 They can be in trailers, horrible conditions,
18 you know, not really seeing the benefits of
19 technology, not being able to open their minds and
20 create a better future; or, they can be at campus
21 settings where some real dramatic improvements are
22 being done.

23 And a lot of these students, we involve
24 them -- I know you do too -- and across our
25 campuses, we involve our students in our planning

1 and our decision-making.

2 And, you know, I can tell you, from Cornell,
3 when they're -- when they're -- when they're not
4 involved and don't see enough action, they shut our
5 buildings down and they make us deliver.

6 That's why, at Cornell, 25 years ago we
7 signed on to the Kyoto Protocols. Our students led
8 the charge, and they made us -- that was the first
9 big action we took at Cornell: Let's sign on to
10 those protocols. The U.S. government isn't doing
11 it, but we have to, our students are demanding it.

12 And they're our customers; we do what they --
13 what they -- what they're demanding.

14 And since then, and even before then, we were
15 involving them.

16 So, a lot of -- we're here for the students
17 and for the future.

18 The -- Mary Beth said it as well, the
19 technologies, some of our campuses, we've -- we have
20 a lot of work being done in, we need storage, we
21 need better storage, we need more storage, of clean
22 electricity.

23 We have a lot of battery and fuel-cell work
24 going on, and Mary Beth said it up front.

25 We have Centers for Advanced Technology.

1 We've got these matching awards.

2 The state -- the state government, is a small
3 program in Empire State Development Corp that helps
4 us win federal research awards.

5 And we've been using that little program to
6 win these big federal awards so that our researchers
7 can make these breakthroughs on batteries and fuel
8 cells, to make better capacitors, super-capacitors,
9 and fuel cells, so that we can store this clean
10 electricity.

11 And I'll just mention one project that we're
12 working on with -- it sounds crazy, but it's true:

13 We have particle accelerators for big
14 science. These things use a lot of electricity.

15 And there's a scientist at Cornell who, in
16 1965, came up with an idea of how to make one of
17 them energy-efficient. And, he's still around from
18 1965.

19 And they -- we got some money from the State,
20 through NYSERDA, clean -- REGI money,
21 greenhouse gas-initiative money, because it's energy
22 conservation. And they built it at Cornell.

23 And with Brookhaven, National Lab is going to
24 use it for their next generation.

25 And it saves 99.8 percent of the electricity

1 used in a particle accelerator.

2 And so particle accelerators around the world
3 are going to be using this technology.

4 It's called an "energy recovery system,"
5 where you recover the energy used.

6 These things use a lot of electricity, so
7 it's a breakthrough.

8 Like Mary Beth said, we're coming up with
9 breakthroughs so that we're not just doing
10 everything we can to save energy, but, also, coming
11 up with new technologies to reuse, save, and, in
12 other ways, become more energy-efficient.

13 Another one at Cornell, I'll just mention,
14 the campus, couple of projects like that, of that
15 scale, we use the lake water to cool the campus.

16 We reduced our electricities for cooling by
17 86 percent. We turned that on 15 years ago.

18 Some people thought we were crazy.

19 But, it's a technology that actually isn't
20 new, but it's a much bigger scale that we do.

21 And there are benefits.

22 When one of our campuses -- and this goes for
23 SUNY and CUNY -- when we do something positive, we
24 (indiscernible) -- we often share.

25 So, during the summer, we have teachers and

1 students from K-12 schools throughout the state on
2 our campuses, learning chemistry, biology.

3 These are our campuses. They're also in
4 these buildings, and they're learning about these
5 improvements we've made.

6 And so it doesn't stop there.

7 We're training a lot of teachers, who, again,
8 are using our labs, like has been said, some of
9 these new technologies. And these scientists were
10 coming up with it.

11 They're on our campuses, and they're helping
12 teachers learn the next generation of science.

13 So we know, if we stand still, somebody else,
14 probably in another country, they're going to eat
15 our lunch, and the students there will learn these
16 things faster than we will.

17 And so another dramatic improvement we're
18 trying to make is, we know we can't electrify
19 everything, it's too much electricity.

20 If we just went to clean electricity, we
21 couldn't have enough -- we couldn't generate enough
22 electricity if we got off of fossil fuel that way.

23 So we're looking at, we call it,
24 "earth-source heat"; going down very, very deep into
25 the earth to heat the campus the way we cool the

1 campus.

2 And so we've done a lot of the background
3 testing. It costs a lot of money to do it.

4 It's been done in Paris. That's how they
5 heat a part of central Paris. They go down
6 two miles and they bring up very hot water.

7 They put down water, bring hot water up.

8 And so we're serious about doing that at
9 Cornell with these very deep wells.

10 It's very expensive up front.

11 Cornell Tech, so we have the benefit of
12 building a new campus on Roosevelt Island. And when
13 you do something new, you can do it the way you want
14 it to be rather than retrofitting.

15 And it costs money, though.

16 And so we demolished that old hospital. And
17 we -- somebody came up with the idea of using the
18 demolition material -- a lot of it had asbestos in
19 it, of -- instead of, you know, carting it away
20 and -- and -- and burying it as toxic waste, they
21 encapsulated it on the site, raising the building
22 site above the flood stage, so that even if sea
23 levels rise in the future, it's -- it's -- they
24 raised the whole site. And then they built these
25 new buildings with all the heat pumps. But, those

1 are traditional heat pumps that -- that -- you know,
2 it took 86 heat pumps for one big building.

3 And, again, that's -- that's the traditional
4 heat pumps.

5 So we're looking at the -- you know, the deep
6 geothermal, seeing if we can go much deeper, and get
7 much hotter water, and heat the campus that way,
8 because we just know -- know it's not feasible to
9 electrify everything.

10 And so we're looking -- again, our scientists
11 are working closely with us as well, to see what the
12 effects on the deal of everything is.

13 So those are just some of the things that
14 we're working on.

15 I just think it leads to a conversation about
16 a bond act.

17 I just think it's natural, that to talk -- we
18 talk about the state budget. I think we're at a --
19 at a different point.

20 There's so much -- so many capital needs, a
21 lot of it around climate.

22 And there are benefits to retrofitting.

23 There are dollars savings, productivity
24 savings.

25 We find that people work better and harder in

1 healthy buildings. They come to work, faster. They
2 spend more time at work.

3 Because we heard previous panels, in some of
4 these buildings, you can't get anything done.

5 In these buildings that are built well,
6 retrofitted well or built new, people get more done,
7 and students want to study there. And much -- just
8 a better learning environment, teaching environment.

9 We just think, you know, that it may be time
10 to go outside the normal budgeting process to make
11 some of these investments because, you build a
12 building, you retrofit a building, you know, even if
13 you say it's a 20- or 30-year retrofit, it -- we've
14 been using these buildings for many, many, many,
15 many years. A lot of our buildings are 1860s at
16 Cornell.

17 And then our average age, I think, is
18 44 years of our buildings.

19 And so we use these buildings intensively,
20 like I said, not just us, but teachers and students
21 from K-12 from around the state.

22 And it would be just good to have a
23 conversation about doing something different instead
24 of just trying to catch up and dealing with this
25 crisis or challenge in normal processes.

1 But I'm happy to answer any questions,
2 talking about Cornell, or students, or anything
3 else.

4 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

5 And, thank you.

6 I had the tour of Cornell Tech with
7 Senator Stewart-Cousins.

8 I just said to Senator Jackson, it's amazing.

9 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: It's different.

10 SENATOR STAVISKY: Not like anything else
11 you've --

12 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: That's right.

13 SENATOR STAVISKY: -- ever seen.

14 But I have one question.

15 The folks from SUNY spoke about a consortium
16 of working with the private colleges toward
17 sustainability issues.

18 And I've always said, and I've said this to
19 you many times, that I think there ought to be more
20 cooperation between SUNY and CUNY, perhaps,
21 geographically. That's an area, I know which there
22 are a lot of SUNY and private colleges in the
23 North Country, particularly.

24 But I notice there are only -- one, two,
25 three -- four institutions from CICU who have signed

1 that letter of sustainability?

2 Can you -- and I asked that question
3 previously.

4 MARY BETH LABATE: Yeah, no, I think we have
5 four now.

6 It's on -- we've started having discussions.
7 And I wish I had -- we had discussions about
8 eight months ago with SUNY, with Karren who was
9 here, on how we can encourage more.

10 I think we're now at that stage where we're
11 going to be able to encourage more of our schools to
12 get involved.

13 And we hope that our -- with the MOU
14 that we just signed with NYSERDA, we hope that
15 will help bring everybody to the table
16 (parties cross-talking) --

17 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: We're part of that.

18 MARY BETH LABATE: -- (parties
19 cross-talking) --

20 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yes, you are.

21 It's Bard, Cornell, Ithaca, and Skidmore.

22 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: Yeah, we're part of the
23 consortium.

24 I think a lot of schools are, frankly,
25 waiting to see how it -- what -- how it works, if it

1 works, because we have to put a bid together and get
2 people to agree, you know, somebody to come in and
3 build this, probably, solar.

4 And I think a lot of people are on the
5 sidelines, wanting to see the details.

6 And, we're big, and we have a lot of
7 expertise in it.

8 We've done a big -- we built a big -- very
9 big solar project recently. It was a lot of work,
10 but we did it.

11 And I think if we do it, if we do things
12 together --

13 SENATOR STAVISKY: I think that's --

14 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: -- it can be really
15 powerful.

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: -- working, for example,
17 with ESF --

18 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: Exactly.

19 SENATOR STAVISKY: -- because they certainly
20 have the ability also, and not just in environmental
21 issues.

22 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: No.

23 SENATOR STAVISKY: I've said this many times,
24 on other issues as well.

25 Perhaps you can get lower cost -- low costs

1 will result.

2 MARY BETH LABATE: Right.

3 And, Senator, that was my last point in my
4 testimony, was, you know, we -- we do not view SUNY
5 and CUNY as competitors. We think of them as, we
6 need to do this together.

7 What I've encouraged my members to do, and
8 when -- and I really encourage SUNY and CUNY to do,
9 they have capital needs.

10 When they need -- when they think they need a
11 new building, do they talk to each other, do they
12 talk to us, and say:

13 Hey, I need dorms. Do you have dorms, any
14 dorm space?

15 I need an engineering building. Could I have
16 a partnership with you where my students can get
17 access to your lab?

18 I think, particularly, given the State's
19 finances right now, the State should be encouraging
20 those conversations before -- before immediately
21 assuming that, you know, a new building needs to be
22 funded, a new dormitory needs to be funded.

23 There may be capacities there that we're just
24 not leveraging.

25 SENATOR STAVISKY: And in -- also in terms of

1 purchasing, the collective power I think should be
2 utilized.

3 I said the same thing to SUNY.

4 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: Yeah, I'll just say,
5 think of HECap.

6 I think HECap's a winner, because think of it
7 in terms of purchasing, where the State has a
8 budget. And for that amount of money, you're
9 purchasing a good, a building renovation, very
10 often, saving energy, as has been said, at a college
11 or university. And look at the value.

12 I know the HECap projects we've done at
13 Cornell, that much HECap, we've gone out and raised
14 money for the rest of it, and we've gotten a big
15 project done.

16 It's a good way of looking at it, as a joint
17 purchasing.

18 SENATOR STAVISKY: Synergistic.

19 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: There you go, exactly.

20 SENATOR JACKSON: Can I --

21 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yes, Senator Jackson.

22 SENATOR JACKSON: So, I appreciate you coming
23 in from the perspective of the private non-profit
24 institutions.

25 I guess, we talk about LEEDs, LEED

1 certification, and you talked about building --
2 building to LEED's certification.

3 As you know, that there's certain levels.

4 What is the highest level of LEED
5 certification?

6 CECIL SCHEIB: Platinum.

7 SENATOR JACKSON: Platinum.

8 CECIL SCHEIB: Yes. Certified, silver, gold,
9 platinum.

10 SENATOR JACKSON: And so you talked about NYU
11 building buildings.

12 All of them are being built at what level?

13 And give me a couple examples.

14 CECIL SCHEIB: So we have, currently, about
15 20 LEED projects, either completed or in process.

16 They represent over 2 million square feet of
17 built area.

18 We have committed to silver as a minimum.
19 And some of them have gone all the way back up to
20 platinum. I think four have gone all the way up to
21 platinum. And, there's a mix.

22 SENATOR JACKSON: If -- if -- if you know,
23 and I don't really know, is there a basic -- I know
24 you're doing more when you're going up.

25 Is there a cost factor between, let's say,

1 silver and --

2 The next one is, what?

3 CECIL SCHEIB: Gold.

4 SENATOR JACKSON: -- gold, and then, gold, is
5 platinum? Is that correct?

6 CECIL SCHEIB: Yes.

7 SENATOR JACKSON: All right.

8 Is -- what type of financial investment to
9 move from one level to the next?

10 If you know, or give me some not very
11 specific, or give me a general category.

12 CECIL SCHEIB: So one thing, I mean, I will
13 answer the question, but I will say that, I work
14 very hard within NYU to get people not to think
15 about it that way.

16 SENATOR JACKSON: (Inaudible.)

17 CECIL SCHEIB: Well, what I try to do is get
18 people to focus on: What can we do in this project
19 that will be of value to our academic mission?

20 Right?

21 We're not buying points. What's the cheapest
22 way to buy more points?

23 Hey, you can get a point if you put in bike
24 racks.

25 Do our students need bike racks?

1 If the answer is, oh, yeah, our students will
2 use bike racks if there's bike racks.

3 Then put in -- then put in the bike rack.

4 And then, so, did that point cost anything if
5 it's something you really needed?

6 And I don't want us doing things, you know,
7 to be, basically, chasing points.

8 Well, what's the cheapest point we can get?

9 You know, that said, if you have a ground-up
10 project, I mean, the costs of LEED, I would say, are
11 very, very small, or, at this point, are on cost
12 parity, 'cause it's about the design choices you
13 make, and the decisions, not extra.

14 You don't need to put solar panels on the
15 building to be a LEED-certified.

16 You don't need to put a green roof on the
17 building to be green-certified.

18 But also keep in mind, in the city now, it's
19 the law, you're gonna have to put on a green roof if
20 you do a new major project.

21 Right?

22 So more and more of these things are starting
23 to become typical -- typical, you know,
24 construction.

25 I would say, LEED Silver, that's just sort of

1 our building default. There's no extra cost there.

2 If you go up to platinum, you've done
3 something; whether it's the solar, or the green
4 roof, or super-insulation, or something.

5 And there will be some modest cost delta, but
6 you might be talking in the low single-digit
7 percent, if that. A very small cost.

8 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay.

9 And then, I'm sorry, I'm thinking about, for
10 example, NYU, I would assume, but NYU has a huge
11 endowment, versus, for example, City College, or
12 some other SUNY, like SUNY New Paltz, where I went
13 to school.

14 And, obviously, when they're talking about
15 building, obviously, I would assume that everyone
16 wants to have a LEED-certified building, you know
17 what I mean?

18 But then how much fund -- especially when
19 SUNY depends mainly, and CUNY, on State monies, how
20 much money do they have to build a project, just
21 like anyone else?

22 Do you know what I mean?

23 CECIL SCHEIB: Well, I can't compare to the
24 state institutions off the top of my head.

25 I can say that, NYU does not -- is not able

1 to rely on its endowed funds for the capital plan.

2 We are -- we are primarily a
3 student-tuition-funded school.

4 And while our endowment might seem large, and
5 I think it's, like, the 39th, or something like
6 that, among the private schools in the country, I'm
7 not sure of the exact number, but it's in that
8 range, we are the nation's largest private
9 university.

10 And so, on a per-student basis, we're down in
11 the 100s. We're not even close.

12 So, actually, compared to our size, we do not
13 have a large endowment.

14 SENATOR JACKSON: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

15 MARY BETH LABATE: (Inaudible.)

16 SENATOR JACKSON: Go ahead, Mary Beth.

17 MARY BETH LABATE: There's something that
18 I've learned in this job now.

19 Endowments are a funny thing.

20 The State highly regulates how our schools --
21 how much of an endowment our schools can use.

22 I've actually had presidents who said, I want
23 to do something transformational. I want to use
24 part of my endowment, but I need the approval of the
25 State.

1 And I think the State is involved for good
2 reason.

3 I like to think of an endowment as comparable
4 to the state's pension system, which I hold the
5 state's pension system near and dear to my heart
6 because I'm a recipient of it.

7 It's sitting on \$50 billion.

8 You guys have a very tough budget coming up,
9 but I don't think anyone would suggest, let's dip
10 into the pension system to close this year's budget,
11 because a pension, like an endowment, is really the
12 commitment to future generations. It's kind of the
13 evergreen.

14 We have made a commitment to you, at NYU, at
15 Cornell, has made a commitment to higher education,
16 that they are in it for the long haul.

17 And I think it's similar if I -- it's similar
18 to a pension system. We have made a commitment to
19 state employees, as to municipal employees, that
20 we'll be in it for the long haul.

21 So, I would love for endowments to be larger
22 than -- and more flexible than people think they
23 are, but they're just not, for any -- any number of
24 reasons.

25 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay.

1 And when you were responding to me, and
2 I appreciate that, because, obviously, you know,
3 from your experience, and you know about that, and
4 I'm learning in that respect --

5 MARY BETH LABATE: I had no idea that they
6 couldn't just come and take as much of their
7 endowment as they wanted.

8 SENATOR JACKSON: -- and I know that --
9 I know that some labor union leaders in New York
10 City, and constituents, would want the New York City
11 pension fund to build affordable housing because of
12 the situation that the homeless population is
13 increasing. And we need, in our city, affordable
14 housing for people who work here and live here.

15 And some of their money in the pensions
16 should be invested in that so that everyone can live
17 in New York City, and not just the wealthy and
18 super-rich.

19 So, I appreciate understanding what you just
20 said.

21 Just have a question for you, Mr. Kruzansky.
22 With respect to Cornell, we're talking about
23 the campus on Roosevelt Island.

24 And you said, rather than cart away and send
25 the landfill, the building material, you

1 encapsulated it, and then put that part of the
2 foundation? Is that correct?

3 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: Under the foundation,
4 that's right. They raised the site of the -- of the
5 build -- of the -- where the building is, because,
6 again, sea-level rise is real.

7 And, there was concern, you know, again, when
8 will it rise, by how much?

9 And, it was a very cost-effective solution
10 because, the only way to get it off the island would
11 be by -- by -- with, you know, barges.

12 And so they used it as a way to raise the
13 building site.

14 SENATOR JACKSON: And so they encapsulated
15 that in, like, I would (parties cross-talking) --

16 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: Some kind of solid --
17 yeah, I don't (parties cross-talking) --

18 SENATOR JACKSON: -- steel, sort of, like --

19 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: -- maybe within concrete,
20 that's often how they do.

21 SENATOR JACKSON: -- I see.

22 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: I know they use a -- at
23 least low-level radioactive waste --

24 SENATOR JACKSON: Right.

25 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: -- out in West Valley.

1 They, basically, built cement logs, so that
2 it will -- you know, no water, nothing, can change,
3 you know, the temperature.

4 But they may have done that.

5 I'm not sure how they did it, but some kind
6 of a process, where they -- they made it this solid,
7 that then lifted the (parties cross-talking) --

8 SENATOR JACKSON: And did they use all of the
9 material, or did they take some of the material out?

10 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: I don't know all, but
11 most.

12 SENATOR JACKSON: Most.

13 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: Most.

14 Also, and then one thing related, I want to
15 mention, we've talked a lot about energy:

16 Water is also a resource we have.

17 We're lucky in New York.

18 The rest of the world is short clean water.

19 We have drinking water, and abundant
20 supplies, because of the -- mostly, because of the
21 Great Lakes.

22 And so that's something we have. It's a
23 strategic asset, if you think about that, for
24 New York State and New York City.

25 Look at our water supply for New York City.

1 The geniuses who put that together, who built
2 that, the first engineer was a woman Cornell grad,
3 from -- engineering grad. First engineer of the
4 New York City Water System, 120 years ago.

5 So -- but we're lucky, you know, we have it.

6 And, you know, that's something also to think
7 about, when we think about the climate, and the
8 energy, and I know that, as part of LEED-certified
9 buildings, this reusing water, it's using less
10 water.

11 Very important to also have that in the
12 conversation when we talk about energy and the
13 environment.

14 But -- so, on that site at Roosevelt Island,
15 we're collecting all the stormwater. We're using
16 that stormwater as just a -- you know, again, we're
17 not short water yet in New York City, but, we don't
18 want to be -- we don't want to be close to the edge.

19 So I think everything we do on water is also
20 really, really wise.

21 SENATOR JACKSON: You talked about drilling
22 two miles down in order to get --

23 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: Heat.

24 SENATOR JACKSON: -- heat.

25 Was that done on this project --

1 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: Not at all.

2 SENATOR JACKSON: -- at Roosevelt Island?

3 Okay.

4 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: So -- right.

5 So that was -- those wells are about 500 feet
6 deep. That's very traditional on Roosevelt Island.

7 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay.

8 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: That's traditional, it's
9 500 feet. That's about the depth you go for just a
10 normal heat pump.

11 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay.

12 CHARLES KRUZANSKY: So the one that we're
13 talking about doing, that was done in other
14 countries.

15 And, actually, for oil wells, they go down
16 deeper than that.

17 But for what we want to do, it's never been
18 done, you know, just for the -- just for the -- just
19 for the heat, just from water.

20 SENATOR JACKSON: Sure.

21 I think, clearly, those examples, you know,
22 around the world, and here in the United States,
23 obviously, when you -- when industry, or with
24 organizations, or countries, see that it actually
25 works, and then you can follow that, you know,

1 follow the lead. I mean, it's already happened,
2 it's already working.

3 And so, you know, people visit, where's it
4 at. Whether it's in Europe or Africa or China, you
5 go and see, and do the research, so you say, it can
6 be done there, it can be done here.

7 So -- but to get back to the funding that you
8 referred to:

9 As you indicated, even though it's
10 \$30 million, that's an investment, in order for the
11 non-profit institutions to understand that we're
12 invested in ensuring that the number of students and
13 the facilities that you have will continue, in order
14 so that people know they have a good institution
15 coming to.

16 So I wanted to thank all of you for coming
17 in, from my perspective.

18 I mean, the Senator has been around for a
19 while.

20 And this is my first time as a state senator,
21 hearing all of this, so -- even though I was on the
22 city council for 12 years.

23 MARY BETH LABATE: And I just want to --
24 I want -- again, I want to thank both of you, and,
25 particularly, because Senator Stavisky has been

1 doing this for a while.

2 We've had our back up against the wall
3 several times. And, each time, we have gone and
4 made our case to the Senator about the students we
5 serve, and about the income diversity and makeup of
6 the students we serve.

7 And, each time, she stepped up for us.

8 So I really, really do appreciate that.

9 SENATOR STAVISKY: It's been the Democratic
10 Conference, really.

11 I think that -- thank you.

12 Incidentally, in the interest of full
13 disclosure:

14 I believe UUP was here earlier, Fred Kowal.

15 And he had a proposal for an endowment
16 program of, something in the neighborhood of
17 \$2 billion for SUNY.

18 That's available online, and I was reading
19 it.

20 And we ought to have, I believe, both private
21 and public endowments.

22 I know there are restrictions on what you can
23 spend the money on.

24 And, at one point, I was thinking, and
25 I think we discussed this, of having HECap based

1 upon the endowment, because some of those colleges
2 may have a problem with a 3-to-1 match.

3 And that was something that we were --
4 I forgot what the problem was, but, we didn't do it.

5 MARY BETH LABATE: Some of our schools, it's
6 just difficult, right.

7 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yeah.

8 But I think that also has to be taken into
9 account, because not everybody has (hits
10 microphone) -- not everybody has Cornell or NYU's
11 endowment.

12 Okay?

13 Well, thank you very much.

14 (All witnesses say "Thank you.")

15 And the award for patience goes to
16 Santana Alvarado, the chairperson of NYPIRG.

17 SANTANA ALVARADO: Hello.

18 I promise this is better than like the stress
19 that is tangible on campuses for finals.

20 [Laughter.]

21 SANTANA ALVARADO: I'm grateful to be here,
22 thank you for having me.

23 SENATOR STAVISKY: And thank you, NYPIRG.

24 I have worked very closely with your folks
25 for many, many years.

1 SANTANA ALVARADO: Yes, and we're grateful.

2 Good afternoon.

3 My name is Santana Alvarado, and I am the
4 chairperson of the New York Public Interest Research
5 Group (NYPIRG), and a Hunter College student, and
6 Bronx Community College alumna.

7 NYPIRG is a student-directed, non-partisan,
8 not-for-profit research and advocacy organization.

9 Consumer protection, environmental
10 preservation, public health, health-care quality,
11 higher-education affordability, and governmental
12 reforms are our principal areas of concern.

13 NYPIRG has campus chapters across the state
14 at SUNY, CUNY, and some private institutions, from
15 Buffalo to Long Island.

16 We appreciate the opportunity to testify
17 before the Senate Committee on Higher Education on
18 the need for a five-year higher-education capital
19 plan.

20 Much of our testimony will be centered on the
21 environmental footprint of the college campuses, and
22 the importance of environmental leadership at
23 colleges across the state.

24 NYPIRG has testified before this Committee on
25 several occasions during the past year.

1 In those testimonies we focused primarily on
2 State funding for higher education.

3 Since the implementation of CUNY SUNY 2020,
4 public college students have contributed
5 \$2.5 billion to a system that has stagnated due to a
6 lack of State funding.

7 We are glad to be able to have a conversation
8 today that is focused on further ways in which
9 New York's public universities can benefit from a
10 long-term capital plan.

11 Students deserve a safe and healthy learning
12 environment, with well-maintained classrooms;
13 functioning, accessible infrastructure, like
14 elevators and escalators; and state-of-the-art
15 technology.

16 With the support of a robustly-funded
17 five-year capital budget, New York public colleges
18 could do this, while, at the same time, executing
19 cutting-edge sustainability plans, a dual benefit,
20 aiding student success and tackling the climate
21 crisis.

22 Institutions of higher education should be
23 paradigms of environmental stewardship, both, to
24 model behavior for students, and because these
25 institutions make up a large portion of

1 New York State's economy.

2 According to a report from
3 Rockefeller Institute, SUNY alone has an economic
4 impact of \$28.6 billion.

5 Additionally, New York's private institutions
6 have an economic impact of \$88.8 billion as of 2017.

7 When institutions of higher education adopt
8 good environmental practices, they have the
9 potential to shape the economy and drive good
10 environmental practices forward elsewhere in this
11 economy.

12 In the face of the global climate crisis,
13 there is a moral imperative for institutions of
14 higher education to lead the path for a more
15 sustainable future.

16 New York's colleges and universities should
17 be models for the rest of the state, and country, to
18 follow.

19 NYPIRG offers the following as of ways for
20 New York's colleges and universities to become these
21 models, outlined further in our testimony:

22 Reducing food waste by adopting measures to
23 prevent putting out more food than what will be
24 consumed, by donating food, and by composting;

25 Reducing plastic waste, by eliminating

1 single-use cutlery, straws, and cups, and by not
2 selling single-use water bottles;

3 And leading the climate change by
4 retrofitting buildings to be more energy-efficient,
5 electrifying buildings, investing in renewables, and
6 switching to electronic and electric vehicles.

7 Throughout each of these areas, students
8 should be involved in college and university
9 processes in shaping these policies.

10 In each of NYPIRG's chapters, we regularly
11 hear about the collapsing infrastructure and
12 facilities that make the struggle to get an
13 education that much harder.

14 New York's student leaders know best what
15 projects are most urgently needed.

16 These leaders should be consulted every step
17 of the way in order to ensure a capital plan that is
18 collaborative and serving the most students
19 possible.

20 In New York City alone, CUNY's fiscal-year
21 2020 request of \$6.2 billion underscores the breadth
22 of critical maintenance and infrastructure projects
23 needed.

24 Climate change is widely considered the
25 greatest environmental threat facing the planet.

1 The accumulation of carbon dioxide and other
2 greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is causing
3 climate instability, warmer temperatures, and rising
4 sea levels.

5 If left unabated, this will likely have
6 devastating impacts on world economies,
7 infrastructure, public health, coastal areas, and
8 natural ecosystems.

9 And I must say that, as a student, in the
10 face of climate crisis, like many students across
11 the world, this is something I'm thinking about when
12 really measuring and prioritizing my future.

13 According to the United Nations'
14 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
15 October 2018 report, the world needs to limit global
16 warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, instead of the
17 previously-stated 2 degrees, if catastrophic results
18 are to be avoided.

19 Additionally, the world must aggressively
20 move to clean, renewable energy in order to cut
21 global carbon emissions in half by 2030 in order to
22 reach this goal.

23 Limiting global warming to
24 1.5 degrees Celsius will require rapid,
25 far-reaching, and unprecedented changes in all

1 aspects of our society, which can be scary, but is
2 also very exciting.

3 To align with the IPCC's findings,
4 New York State adopted the Climate Leadership and
5 Community Protection Act into law in 2019.

6 The CLCPA establishes several goals,
7 including:

8 85 percent reduction in greenhouse gas
9 emissions from 1990 levels, and net zero emissions
10 by 2050;

11 70 percent renewable energy for electricity
12 by 2030, and zero emissions by 2040;

13 6 GW of solar by 2025, 9 GW of offshore wind
14 by 2035, and 3 GW of energy storage by 2030, as well
15 as energy efficiency goals of one point -- of
16 185 trillion BTU reduction from 2025 projections.

17 The adoption of this law comes at a critical
18 time, and we are so grateful for it.

19 Scientists have declared 2018 as the
20 fourth-hottest year on record. And each of the
21 four -- of the past four years have made up the
22 hottest years on earth since recording began in the
23 nineteenth century.

24 July 2019 was declared the hottest month ever
25 recorded.

1 New York State must move rapidly in order to
2 meet these goals.

3 Colleges and universities in New York State
4 can help New York achieve these goals.

5 NYPIRG has long advocated for kicking off
6 implementation of climate policies immediately on
7 State-owned facilities and properties.

8 SUNY alone makes up 40 percent of
9 New York State's-owned facilities.

10 New York can jump-start efforts to make the
11 state's climate goals by enabling SUNY and CUNY to
12 retrofit their buildings to be more
13 energy-efficient, to electrify their buildings, and
14 to invest in more renewables and electric vehicles
15 and EV infrastructure.

16 SUNY has already made some positive policies
17 leading toward this direction through the SUNY Clean
18 Energy Roadmap.

19 These initiatives should be fast-tracked, and
20 considered by private universities as well.

21 At SUNY and CUNY, it is critical that
22 additional capital funding from the State is
23 provided for such efforts.

24 And as you know, Senators, NYPIRG is always
25 here to be at your full disposal when working on

1 these projects.

2 Thank you.

3 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

4 Any questions?

5 SENATOR JACKSON: Sure.

6 So, I don't know if I had your copy of your
7 testimony.

8 SENATOR STAVISKY: No, it's not included
9 (parties cross-talking) --

10 SENATOR JACKSON: So if you can submit --

11 SANTANA ALVARADO: We have them.

12 SENATOR JACKSON: -- you have them?

13 SANTANA ALVARADO: Yeah, yeah.

14 SENATOR STAVISKY: Okay.

15 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay, make sure that we get
16 a copy.

17 SANTANA ALVARADO: Definitely.

18 SENATOR JACKSON: But -- so, I want to thank
19 you for coming in.

20 And, as the chairperson of NYPIRG, you said
21 you're the chairperson.

22 To me, you look so young to be a chairperson
23 of an organization that's so progressive in trying
24 to deal with our environment.

25 So, congratulations to you as being the

1 chair.

2 And, obviously, you've talked about, you
3 attended Bronx Community College, and, I think you
4 attended, or are an alum, of Hunter, or you still
5 are attending?

6 SANTANA ALVARADO: I'm graduating in May, and
7 we're excited.

8 SENATOR JACKSON: Well -- so, I don't know if
9 you were here, present, when the students were
10 testifying.

11 You heard about the situation at Bronx --

12 SANTANA ALVARADO: Yeah.

13 SENATOR JACKSON: -- Community College.

14 SANTANA ALVARADO: Close to home.

15 I was working in another building as a tutor.
16 And I remember students coming in so aggravated,
17 that they couldn't find their classes, they were
18 missing classes.

19 And at Bronx Community College, we were
20 already having trouble with students attending
21 classes, and feeling empowered to really show up
22 their full selves.

23 And so I know that that was so devastating.

24 And Colston Hall was like my building.

25 So, it was hard.

1 SENATOR JACKSON: Well, and -- in your
2 testimony, I was happy to hear, and I -- I --
3 I practice this, as far as food, only take what you
4 can eat.

5 I tell you, I've attended many functions,
6 especially at church functions, where they prepare
7 their own food and they serve. And I noticed that
8 many, many people, maybe up to 50 percent, don't
9 even eat everything that's on their plate.

10 SANTANA ALVARADO: Right.

11 SENATOR JACKSON: So, when I go to places,
12 and I was at a Democratic club holiday party, and
13 they were serve -- and they have some good food.
14 They have mac and cheese, and rice and peas, and all
15 of that.

16 And I know, I was going to my nephew's house
17 for dinner a little later. And so I said, No, no,
18 no. Just half of that spoon, you know?

19 Because one of the things I try to practice,
20 and I try to communicate that all through my family
21 when my children were growing up: We don't waste
22 food. Food is so expensive. And people around the
23 city, and country, and the world, are starving.

24 And so we have to understand that.

25 And then you talked about, using -- stop

1 using, you know, single-use plastic, you know,
2 straws, what have you.

3 But there's some plastic utensils, in my
4 opinion, you can just wash them out and use them
5 again, and they're not just a single-use. But, you
6 know, if it's -- I've seen good-quality, like,
7 plastic forks and knives, and I'm saying, these
8 things, you just rinse them, wash them off, and you
9 can use them again.

10 But, I hear you loud and clear with respects
11 to that type of situation.

12 And as you know, we talked about, there's
13 going to be a \$6.2 billion deficit, overall.

14 And, dealing with, I guess, this -- the
15 budget, and not even talking about the capital needs
16 of SUNY and CUNY.

17 And so I would assume that you would agree
18 that the state Legislature and the Governor, in
19 order to deal with that, have to either raise
20 revenues.

21 And, so, do you have any thoughts about that?

22 SANTANA ALVARADO: Raising revenue?

23 SENATOR JACKSON: Yes.

24 SANTANA ALVARADO: Well, I think what's
25 really exciting about this capital plan, to speak on

1 what you said earlier, is that it provides this
2 opportunity, through bonds, to really implement
3 policy, that then affects culture, because we're
4 from a culture that, of course, you reuse plastic.

5 Like, plastic spoons, my mom be putting
6 plastic plates, in the dishwasher, to reuse them.
7 And they're durable enough to sustain that.

8 But that's a culture of, like, we don't
9 waste. We're not -- we shouldn't be wasting, for
10 many reasons.

11 And that's not the culture at CUNY. And
12 students oftentimes are thinking about, finals, and
13 getting to class, and they're not thinking, let me
14 save this in my backpack so I can use a fork later.

15 But there's so many time when I've needed a
16 fork, and have not had one.

17 And so I think it's about the culture of,
18 really -- and food waste too.

19 Like, this is not even a system where, if
20 there is a lot of food, you can give it away to all
21 the homeless people that we see, especially at
22 Hunter College, which food -- students are
23 food-insecure.

24 And, like, we're in a very rich and wealthy
25 neighborhood of the Lower East Side or Upper East

1 Side, but, you know, we see poverty on our doorstep,
2 at the train.

3 And so it's not even, like, oh, the food that
4 we don't use, we can give away, and, therefore,
5 we're not wasting, and the plastic that we're using,
6 we're reusing.

7 It's this culture of, I don't have time to
8 think about anything but surviving.

9 And so, I agree.

10 And I think, as for revenue, I mean, I'm very
11 progressive. And I think there are people in
12 New York City who have it like that, and who can
13 give it like that.

14 And it's important to lean on the people who
15 are benefiting from the labor and the economy of
16 New York City, through a wealth tax, through a
17 millionaire, billionaire, tax, and really holding
18 them accountable, because those are people taking
19 private planes and jets throughout the world. And
20 that's not good for the environment either.

21 So, how are they going to be held accountable
22 in a way that students don't have to?

23 I'm barely making ends meet with food
24 insecurity, so I can't afford to think, oh, yes, a
25 plastic spoon will be the difference.

1 But really implementing these strategies in a
2 way that targets those who have that time and have
3 that luxury, and because they have that money.

4 And then being, like, hey, students, I'm
5 going to hold your hand through this, and I'm going
6 to provide the means for us to start thinking about
7 the environment in a way that prioritizes our
8 future.

9 Because (hits microphone) -- oh, sorry.

10 I'm all excited.

11 But I'm the one that's going have to deal
12 with this. And my children, if I have any, given
13 these issues, are going to have to deal with this.

14 So I think the students are ready, and we're
15 willing to help, and advocate, and step up.

16 And I'm sorry that the students couldn't be
17 here today.

18 But it really is about -- they were here.

19 And we represent hundreds and thousands of
20 students across the state who are, sadly, having to
21 think about some harder issues.

22 SENATOR JACKSON: Well, thank you for coming
23 in. Appreciate it.

24 SANTANA ALVARADO: Thank you.

25 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

1 And, we are aware that NYPIRG is a
2 student-run, student-oriented --

3 SANTANA ALVARADO: Yes.

4 SENATOR STAVISKY: -- organization that has
5 been around for many years.

6 SANTANA ALVARADO: Yeah, and we're grateful
7 for you hearing the student voices, because they are
8 not heard enough.

9 Thank you.

10 SENATOR STAVISKY: That's why we are
11 student -- the Committee is also student-oriented.

12 So, thank you.

13 Thank you all for coming, and staying.

14 It is 2:35, and the hearing is adjourned.

15 Thank you.

16 (Whereupon, the public hearing held before
17 the New York State Senate Standing Committee on
18 Higher Education concluded at 2:35 p.m., and
19 adjourned.)

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