

1 BEFORE THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE FINANCE
2 AND ASSEMBLY WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEES

3 JOINT LEGISLATIVE HEARING

4 In the Matter of the
5 2022-2023 EXECUTIVE BUDGET ON
6 HIGHER EDUCATION

7 Virtual Hearing
8 Conducted Online via Zoom

9 February 7, 2022
10 11:02 a.m.

11 PRESIDING:

12 Senator Liz Krueger
13 Chair, Senate Finance Committee

14 Assemblywoman Helene Weinstein
15 Chair, Assembly Ways & Means Committee

16 PRESENT:

17 Senator Thomas F. O'Mara
18 Senate Finance Committee (RM)

19 Assemblyman Edward P. Ra
20 Assembly Ways & Means Committee (RM)

21 Assemblywoman Deborah J. Glick
22 Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee

23 Senator Toby Stavisky
24 Chair, Senate Higher Education Committee

Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn

Assemblyman Mark Walczyk

Senator John C. Liu

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3 PRESENT: (Continued)

4 Assemblywoman Jo Anne Simon

5 Senator Diane J. Savino

6 Assemblywoman Patricia Fahy

7 Assemblyman Harry B. Bronson

8 Assemblywoman Rebecca A. Seawright

9 Senator Pete Harckham

10 Assemblywoman Alicia Hyndman

11 Assemblyman Harvey Epstein

12 Senator Andrew Gounardes

13 Assemblyman John T. McDonald III

14 Senator James Gaughran

15 Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon

16 Senator Gustavo Rivera

17 Assemblyman Erik M. Dilan

18 Assemblywoman Judy Griffin

19 Assemblyman Victor M. Pichardo

20 Senator Robert Jackson

21 Assemblyman Kevin A. Cahill

22 Assemblyman William Colton

23 Senator Sue Serino

24 Assemblyman Robert Smullen

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3 PRESENT: (Continued)

4 Assemblywoman Vivian E. Cook
 5 Assemblywoman Phara Souffrant Forrest
 6 Assemblyman Garrett Gandolfo
 7 Senator Jeremy A. Cooney
 8 Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner
 9 Senator James Tedisco

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8 Dr. Frederick E. Kowal
 President
 9 United University Professions
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10 Andrew Sako
 President
 11 Faculty Federation
 of Erie Community College

12 -on behalf of-
 New York State United
 13 Teachers (NYSUT)
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14 Christopher Lacosse
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 15 University Police Officers
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6 Donna Stelling-Gurnett
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7 Association of Proprietary
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Michael A. Molina

9 President

Association of Program

10 Administrators for CSTEP and
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12 President

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13 Colleges and Universities
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1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Good morning.
2 I'm Helene Weinstein, chair of the New York
3 State Assembly's Ways and Means Committee,
4 cochair of today's hearing.

5 And today we begin the seventh in a
6 series of hearings conducted by the joint
7 fiscal committees of the Legislature
8 regarding the Governor's proposed budget for
9 fiscal year 2022-2023. And the hearings are
10 conducted pursuant to the New York State
11 Constitution and the Legislative Law.

12 Today the Assembly Ways and Means
13 Committee and the Senate Finance Committee
14 will hear testimony concerning the Governor's
15 budget proposal for higher education.

16 So I'm going to introduce now the
17 members of the Assembly who are here, and
18 then turn it over to my cochair, Liz Krueger,
19 to introduce her colleagues from the Senate.

20 So we have with us our Higher Ed
21 chair, Assemblywoman Glick; Assemblywoman
22 Bichotte Hermelyn, Assemblyman Bronson,
23 Assemblywoman Buttenschon, Assemblyman
24 Epstein, Assemblywoman Seawright,

1 Assemblywoman Simon.

2 And why don't I turn first to my
3 ranker, Ed Ra, to introduce the members of
4 his conference who are here.

5 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Good morning.

6 We are joined by Assemblyman Mark
7 Walczyk, our ranker on the Higher Education
8 Committee, as well as Assemblyman Smullen.

9 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Okay, and now
10 to -- and I thought I saw Assemblywoman
11 Gandolfo here a moment ago, but maybe not
12 anymore.

13 Senator Krueger, if you could
14 introduce your colleagues.

15 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you very
16 much. Great.

17 So I want to introduce Senator Pete
18 Harckham, Senator John Liu, Senator Jim
19 Gaughran, Senator Jeremy Cooney,
20 Senator Gustavo Rivera, Senator Andrew
21 Gounardes. Of course the chair of Higher
22 Education, Toby Stavisky.

23 And I will turn it over to my ranker
24 on Finance to introduce his conference, and

1 that is Tom O'Mara.

2 SENATOR O'MARA: Thank you,
3 Chairwoman Krueger.

4 On our side of the aisle we are joined
5 by Senator Sue Serino and Senator Jim
6 Tedisco. Thank you.

7 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Great.

8 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

9 And we also have been joined by
10 Assemblywoman Fahy.

11 So I think most of the members have
12 been in hearings before, but let me just go
13 through the time limits, and also for the
14 witnesses coming up.

15 Governmental witnesses will have
16 10 minutes to make a presentation. They
17 don't have to use all of their 10 minutes; we
18 already have the testimony submitted.

19 Nongovernmental witnesses will have
20 three minutes to present their testimony when
21 we get to that.

22 The chairs of the relevant committees
23 for the hearing will have 10 minutes and a
24 second round of three minutes if needed.

1 Ranking members of these committees will get
2 five minutes each, and all other members of
3 the relevant committees that are here, both
4 Assemblymembers and Senators, will get
5 three minutes each.

6 And as I mentioned, the written
7 testimony has been submitted, distributed to
8 the members and the Senators. So there's no
9 need to read your testimony. Summarization
10 is always encouraged.

11 And just a reminder, really to the
12 legislators, that the time limits are for
13 both the question and please leave more than
14 a second or two for the witnesses to answer.

15 With that, I'd like to now welcome our
16 first witness. This hearing is being
17 conducted with the Assembly as the main
18 sponsor of today's -- or the first sponsor of
19 the hearing. So after the first witnesses --
20 after witnesses testify, we'll go to the
21 Assembly and then to the Senate, and back and
22 forth until we have -- are either exhausted
23 or have exhausted all of the questions.

24 So we go now to the State University

1 of New York, Interim Chancellor Deborah
2 Stanley.

3 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Good
4 morning, Chairpersons Krueger, Weinstein,
5 Stavisky and Glick, as well as all members of
6 the Senate, Assembly and staff that are here
7 today.

8 I am Deborah Stanley, and since
9 January 15th I have had the privilege of
10 serving as the Interim Chancellor of the
11 State University of New York. I've come to
12 know several of you over the course of my
13 25 years as President at SUNY Oswego, and
14 it's good to see you today.

15 On behalf of the Board of Trustees,
16 I'm pleased to have this opportunity to
17 discuss Governor Kathy Hochul's vision for
18 the SUNY system for both the 2022-'23 year
19 and beyond, and to share the perspectives of
20 our students, faculty, and staff on the
21 proposed Executive Budget.

22 I'm joined today by both Bob Megna,
23 SUNY's interim Chief Financial Officer and
24 President of the Rockefeller Institute of

1 Government, and Cheryl Hamilton, SUNY's
2 Student Advocate and Executive Director of
3 the Educational Opportunity Program, who
4 heads our work on many of the most important
5 issues that ensure student success.

6 Before I begin my budget remarks, I'd
7 like to take a moment to thank all of you and
8 our other partners in the Legislature,
9 Governor Hochul, the Division of the Budget,
10 New York State Department of Health, and
11 New York's federal Congressional delegation.

12 As you can imagine, the past two years
13 have been an extraordinarily trying time for
14 the SUNY community. Support from you and our
15 other partners through formal guidelines and
16 expert information, as well as financial
17 infusions, made it possible for our campuses
18 to keep their doors open, for students to
19 safely return to campus to continue their
20 academic and extracurricular activities, and
21 for our institutions to contribute to the
22 battle against COVID-19, especially our
23 hospitals.

24 This was done through caring for

1 COVID-19 patients, producing groundbreaking
2 research, as well as hosting mass testing and
3 vaccination sites on our campuses.

4 In terms of the Executive Budget, it's
5 important to note the atmosphere in which
6 it's proposed. The pandemic came at a time
7 of major change for higher education. It
8 brought into even greater light concerns over
9 access and affordability that have been
10 expressed in the general public, as you know,
11 and by prospective students, especially those
12 from underserved communities.

13 This is a particular concern of mine,
14 and one I know you share, as SUNY is
15 respected as one of the greatest institutions
16 for creating upward social mobility. In
17 addition, the pandemic accelerated enrollment
18 challenges for many institutions of
19 postsecondary education, including in SUNY.

20 However, I'd like to point out that
21 not every sector was affected equally. In
22 fact, our University Centers and many
23 four-year degree-granting institutions kept
24 enrollment stable and maybe even had modest

1 growth in the number of students they serve.

2 Finally, the pandemic hastened changes
3 needed in how higher education serves these
4 students. Studies indicate that by 2027 --
5 and you know that's almost upon us --
6 70 percent of all new jobs created in the
7 United States will require postsecondary
8 education. And the students of today also
9 tell us that they seek a different approach
10 to receiving their education. I want you to
11 know that SUNY is on the forefront of
12 delivering.

13 I share these realities because they
14 are central to understanding Governor
15 Hochul's vision for making SUNY the greatest
16 comprehensive system of public higher
17 education in the nation. We share her vision
18 and know that with the right assets,
19 investments, and partnerships, we can achieve
20 it. SUNY cannot continue with the same
21 policies and practices of the past.

22 We are on a path to continue SUNY's
23 academic leadership in the world. And as we
24 move forward, we recognize that many of the

1 changes will need your partnership, because
2 they will need to be supported by
3 legislative action.

4 Given how comprehensive and complex
5 SUNY is, with 64 colleges and universities,
6 including research and doctoral-granting
7 institutions, four-year and master's-granting
8 institutions, 30 community colleges, three
9 hospitals, a law school, a veterans' home,
10 and partnership with a national laboratory,
11 change does not come overnight.

12 Recognizing this, the Governor has
13 directed SUNY and its partners to work
14 collaboratively across the sectors to develop
15 a wide-ranging and detailed action plan.
16 Objectives include increasing enrollment and
17 redesigning our academic models to meet the
18 needs of every student, including not only
19 students straight out of high school but also
20 the returning professionals who need
21 flexibility and affordability to earn a
22 certificate or degree to advance or change
23 their career.

24 This year's Executive Budget is the

1 foundation to begin that work, and it is a
2 strong foundation. This proposed budget is
3 the most significant Executive proposal of
4 investment into public higher education in
5 more than 20 years, and it underscores the
6 Governor's understanding of and commitment to
7 the ways that SUNY is inextricably linked to
8 the well-being of New York's economy, its
9 workforce, its healthcare system, and so much
10 more.

11 This is something which those of us
12 who have worked with Governor Hochul know she
13 has been interested in over the years.

14 We respectfully urge the Legislature
15 to support all funding provisions pertaining
16 to public higher education in the Executive
17 Budget proposal, including:

18 Elimination of the TAP gap this year,
19 in '22-'23. We were delighted to see action
20 in the last budget to close the TAP gap
21 within three years. The TAP gap drains tens
22 of millions of dollars annually from campus
23 budgets, and we applaud the Executive's
24 proposal to close it for good this year.

1 Funding maintenance and new capital
2 projects. To attract students and provide
3 the excellence that allows our graduates to
4 compete with graduates from across the state
5 and the country, our campuses need the
6 classroom and lab space that other
7 institutions provide. The Executive's plan
8 will provide SUNY campuses with the resources
9 necessary for much-needed and shovel-ready
10 projects.

11 Increasing faculty. Just as SUNY
12 needs physical assets, we need the ability to
13 attract world-class faculty who reflect the
14 diversity of this state.

15 Implementing the 100 percent community
16 college floor. Our greatest enrollment
17 challenges are in the community college
18 sector, where enrollment ebbs and flows in
19 New York State as it does nationally. This
20 will stabilize funding.

21 Establishing a real Part-Time TAP
22 Program, and also reinstating TAP for
23 incarcerated individuals. This expansion
24 will provide financial assistance to those

1 part-time students juggling work and
2 childcare needs, and will also help
3 incarcerated individuals reduce recidivism.

4 Expanding the opportunity programs. We
5 did great work last year creating 1,000 new
6 spots in EOP, establishing medical EOP, and
7 increasing financial support for every
8 student. The 10 percent increase this year
9 will give us even more opportunity for
10 students to succeed.

11 Reforming the academic program review
12 process is important for us to get our work
13 done.

14 Providing SUNY hospital and mental
15 health workers a "Heroes Grant." It's
16 imperative to show our appreciation.

17 I look forward to working with the
18 Governor and the Legislature to find
19 collaborative ways that we can implement this
20 vision for SUNY and ensure continued and
21 increased success of the SUNY system.

22 Before I close to take your questions,
23 I'd like to note that this year's SUNY alumni
24 legislative class is one of the largest in

1 history. In all, 63 of you and your
2 colleagues in the Senate and Assembly
3 graduated with one or more SUNY degrees.
4 Several more have taken courses at our
5 campuses. Your success is something we're
6 very proud of. Thank you for all you do in
7 support of our students, our faculty, and our
8 staff.

9 I'd be happy to discuss the Executive
10 Budget proposals previously noted, and any
11 other items of interest to you, in greater
12 detail. Thank you.

13 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you. And
14 thank you for -- we got the time clock to
15 work, and thank you for staying within our
16 prescribed time limit. That hopefully will
17 be a message all will observe.

18 So now we go to our Assembly Higher Ed
19 chair, Assemblywoman Glick.

20 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very
21 much for the opportunity to discuss some
22 issues with you. And I'll try very hard to
23 just use the 10 minutes and not come back.

24 But the Governor's budget offers an

1 increase in operating aid for the purpose of
2 increasing full-time faculty, which we know
3 is key to supporting students and seeing that
4 they get out of school in a timely fashion.

5 But it funds -- after years, I'd say
6 decades of disinvestment, it funds 340
7 full-time faculty. It's a huge system. If
8 you looked at it, 64 campuses, you might get,
9 I don't know, five or six per campus.

10 I'm wondering what we would need to do
11 to dramatically increase the operating aid in
12 order to ensure that you could hire and be
13 competitive with other schools in hiring the
14 best.

15 And how many professors are you short
16 at this -- overall?

17 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, we
18 are very grateful for the \$53 million call in
19 the budget. It is incredible for us to see
20 that included.

21 However, it also includes the fact
22 that the campuses will have to undertake the
23 fringe benefits. And that will reduce the
24 number of faculty that we can of course

1 afford. As you rightly make the computation,
2 that it would be about 340 new full-time
3 faculty. I have a couple of issues here.

4 So if in fact the Legislature could
5 see your way clear to take that provision
6 away about paying for the fringes, I think we
7 could probably move up full-time faculty
8 somewhere near 500. That would give us a
9 really good chance to do the things we need
10 to do with new program development, but
11 especially in attracting underserved
12 faculty -- underrepresented faculty to our
13 midst.

14 As you know, our students have risen
15 across the system, in underrepresented
16 students. And they tell us very clearly,
17 often, that they want to see in the
18 classrooms people who have succeeded but
19 people who look like them, people who have
20 done the work that they intend to do.

21 And we are trying very hard. It's
22 going to take enormous work, but we have in
23 fact a brilliant program at SUNY right now
24 called PRODiG that has hired, to date,

1 136 new faculty. And it will continue to
2 hire underrepresented faculty and women into
3 the sciences and STEM programs. But we need
4 more work.

5 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you.

6 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: We need
7 to look at the pipeline issues. And --

8 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you. You
9 know, my time is going to evaporate, so I
10 want to go on to a couple of other areas, and
11 maybe I will come back.

12 You talked about the capital, but we
13 don't now have a five-year plan. Is SUNY
14 going to propose that the action plan include
15 a five-year capital plan like we do for the
16 MTA in the downstate region?

17 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: We hope
18 so, yes. Right now it calls for \$550 million
19 a year. We know that when we look at
20 deferred maintenance and the backlog of
21 projects, that it's more -- the need is more
22 like \$850 million a year.

23 So with the proposal this year to take
24 monies that have been in dormant programs and

1 move them into the capital program for this
2 year, we believe that will be a much-needed
3 infusion and it will bring us a long way to
4 satisfying the need this year.

5 But we would like to see that happen
6 for all five years, to have it be a five-year
7 program.

8 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you.

9 The Climate Leadership and Community
10 Protection Act requires that agencies
11 implement strategies to reduce greenhouse gas
12 emissions and review all decisions to see how
13 they are consistent with the pollution
14 reduction goals and ensure that those
15 decisions don't disproportionately burden
16 disadvantaged communities.

17 So I am wondering, where is SUNY --
18 since we have been told many times that SUNY
19 has 40 percent of the state's buildings,
20 where is SUNY on these requirements? Because
21 they actually are requirements of state
22 agencies. And, you know, while you are a
23 higher education -- broad-based higher
24 education institutions, you still are viewed

1 budgetarily as a state agency.

2 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, we
3 are certainly looking at the plan just
4 released, the scoping plan for that act, and
5 we're looking at that very carefully.

6 But SUNY is really ahead on this game.
7 And yes, we do have 40 percent of the
8 physical assets of the State of New York, but
9 we also have requirements of plans from the
10 campuses for every proposed project. Every
11 new building proposed, every major
12 restoration proposed must meet carbon zero,
13 net zero requirements before it gets the
14 green light to go forward.

15 We have -- we're working with NYSERDA
16 on training issues to look at geothermal
17 wells and heat pumps usage on campuses, to
18 reduce the need for electricity as we move
19 forward.

20 So we have many strategies in place
21 right now, and have had for many years, to
22 reduce greenhouse gases and reduce energy
23 usage. So we've reduced energy usage over
24 the last 30 years, and greenhouse gases have

1 been reduced about 20 percent in the last
2 10 years.

3 You know, most presidents in the SUNY
4 system are signatories to the college and
5 university presidents climate initiative, and
6 that's a national initiative that has more
7 than 600 schools signed on, with requirements
8 of reporting every year what you do on campus
9 to reduce your carbon footprint. And it's
10 pretty -- pretty strict. As you go forward,
11 you want to see how you line up with other
12 campuses. And we're all, I think, competing
13 with each other to be the best in class.

14 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Well, that's
15 very good to hear, and we will look forward
16 to more information on that.

17 You know, the Governor has indicated
18 that she wants to expand the healthcare
19 cohort within the state -- you know, really
20 generate 20 percent more people working in
21 healthcare. A lot of that will be nurses.
22 And our nursing programs, which SUNY has
23 many, usually have to turn people away.

24 How oversubscribed are you? And

1 what's the demand? And I believe the
2 restriction is largely on nurse educators,
3 the limit of nurse educators. Where do you
4 think you are, and what do we have to do in
5 order to help the Governor's goal of
6 increasing healthcare professionals?

7 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, I
8 know the answer about what we need. I don't
9 know the details about numbers, of exactly
10 where we are.

11 But you're right about nurse
12 educators. It's pretty difficult to get
13 nurses to -- into the programs. We are going
14 to have to incent that pipeline a lot better
15 than we do to get them into the programs.

16 But one of the problems has been with
17 accredited programs and getting those
18 programs approved through the state processes
19 and the professional processes..

20 So we've taken a look at that. Some
21 of the processes have changed, and we need to
22 make sure that we can get our campuses
23 developing programs to train nurse educators
24 and that those programs will be approved.

1 Once they're approved we can, I think, span
2 it across the state and incent more nurses to
3 go into additional education to become nurse
4 educators.

5 That will help us have the faculty
6 available to train more nurses. Without
7 that, we're not going to get to where we need
8 to get to in the state.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: We would also
10 like to know -- it's great that we've been
11 able to increase EOP. We would like to know
12 what is the demand. We don't expect you to
13 have that at your fingertips, but if your
14 folks could get us the information.

15 How many applications do you get that
16 you have to turn away?

17 And I will cede my 6 seconds and come
18 back for a brief three. Thank you.

19 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Great. We've
20 been joined by Assemblyman McDonald.

21 And now to the Senate.

22 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

23 We've been joined by Senator Diane
24 Savino and Senator Robert Jackson. I think

1 that's it since last time.

2 And our first questioner will be our
3 chair of Higher Ed, Toby Stavisky, for
4 10 minutes.

5 SENATOR STAVISKY: Sorry, I was muted.
6 Which is a hard thing to do, I think, except
7 on a computer.

8 President -- I think of you as
9 president. But Chancellor, congratulations
10 on your appointment. And I'm one of those
11 folks who's known you for many years. I was
12 up in Oswego about 10, 12 years ago for a
13 hearing. And we really all of us thank you
14 for your service.

15 Very quickly, because -- you talked
16 about full-time faculty. What is the
17 percentage of full-time faculty at SUNY?

18 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I think
19 we have about 52 percent full-time faculty
20 right now.

21 Over the past 10 years it's really
22 flipped from -- we're kind of even, but high
23 40s about 10 years ago, now a little bit over
24 50 percent. And it used to be part-time

1 faculty were a little bit greater than
2 full-time faculty, but it's flipped right
3 now.

4 We know that, you know, we provide
5 excellence when we have more full-time
6 faculty. When you look at the numbers in the
7 different sectors it gets a little skewed,
8 though, because we look at the doctoral
9 campuses and they show that they have a great
10 many full-time faculty and not many part-time
11 faculty. They have a lot of graduate
12 assistants. So it is a little bit different
13 there, and so we may not be comparing the
14 right apples to apples.

15 But in fact I think we're making
16 advances. And with the new funding that the
17 Governor has proposed, we will make great
18 advances on the campuses.

19 SENATOR STAVISKY: Great. Thank you.
20 One other -- a couple of other questions.

21 Chancellor, last week you published an
22 op-ed in the Empire Report, and it talked
23 about how applications for SUNY have been
24 down about 20 percent or so -- which is the

1 largest decrease in SUNY's history, I
2 suspect.

3 Is this trend being supported and
4 reported by -- at all of the SUNY
5 institutions? Or are there some that have
6 seen increases in applications? And is there
7 any -- are these demographic or geographic
8 applications from various areas? In other
9 words, do you see any trends here with the
10 decline in applications?

11 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, we
12 certainly had seen a trend even before the
13 pandemic, that there was a falling off of
14 applications. That's not necessarily true in
15 every sector. Certainly the
16 doctoral-granting institutions are up
17 significantly. Every other sector is down.
18 But of course the community colleges are down
19 rather significantly.

20 SENATOR STAVISKY: Very significantly.

21 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Yes. We
22 look at both ends of our spectrum there.

23 The demographics of the State of
24 New York have something to do with that. We

1 know that because it was not necessarily
2 related to the economy, it was not
3 necessarily related to the pandemic. But we
4 also believe that just the changes in the
5 thoughts about higher education have been
6 impacting that. And the changes in the way
7 higher education is delivered have also been
8 impacting whether or not, especially at the
9 community college level, students believe
10 that they need that two-year education or
11 that they should be right into college right
12 from high school.

13 So we have a lot to look at. It's a
14 complex issue. It's not only about
15 marketing, it's not only about programs, it's
16 not only about full-time faculty, it's not
17 only about where was the success that you had
18 before. It's looking at a full spectrum of
19 data and working sometimes with
20 professionals, but also working in the
21 artificial intelligence realm and bringing to
22 bear some of the software that can help us
23 understand where we are.

24 So we're trying very much to

1 understand this and move forward. We have a
2 task force that we're going to be putting in
3 place, it's been being developed as we speak.
4 We have the rubric already designed at SUNY;
5 we did it in the last two weeks since I've
6 been at SUNY. It's a task force that brings
7 together many people from around the
8 university and outside of the university, so
9 that we can approach this issue and start to
10 work on it so that we can see results.

11 Hopefully the Legislature will be part
12 of it as well.

13 SENATOR STAVISKY: Hopefully. I'll
14 get back to that issue in a moment.

15 But I understand that the Executive
16 Budget is increasing the spending authority
17 for the SUNY hospitals, the three SUNY
18 hospitals, by 250 million. But they haven't
19 reinstated the SUNY hospital subsidy that was
20 discontinued a number of years ago.

21 How has this impacted the SUNY
22 hospitals? And are you going to be seeking
23 additional help from the Legislature -- I
24 think it was something in the neighborhood of

1 87 million or something that was never
2 restored. And I hate to use the word
3 "restored" because this is a budget of
4 expansion, not retraction.

5 But how are the SUNY hospitals going
6 to continue to stay healthy, in a sense, in
7 light of inadequate -- to me, what I think is
8 inadequate funding?

9 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, we
10 hope they stay healthy because they have been
11 the heroes throughout the pandemic. We are
12 so proud of --

13 SENATOR STAVISKY: That's why I'm
14 asking the question, yes.

15 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: -- of our
16 hospitals.

17 I'm going to turn to our CFO and ask
18 him to comment on that question.

19 SUNY INTERIM CFO MEGNA: Yeah, I think
20 the members of the committee know that in the
21 past there was a significant subsidy for both
22 debt service and fringe benefits, which I
23 think originally started out around the year
24 2000 at about 150, 160 million, and then I

1 think went down to about 76 million. And I
2 think that was phased out in 2017-'18.

3 And so I think the debt service
4 component now is about \$70 million. And so I
5 think one of the things that will be a huge
6 advantage to SUNY is the debt service on
7 hospital construction.

8 SENATOR STAVISKY: But in addition to
9 the debt service, which the state pays for
10 every other state agency, there were
11 additional subsidies that were phased out a
12 number of years ago, and that is of concern.

13 Because as you said, the SUNY
14 hospitals really were on the frontline of the
15 last two years during the pandemic. And it's
16 sort of frustrating when you see certain
17 advantages paid to other hospitals and not to
18 the SUNY institutions, particularly at
19 Downstate, but also at Upstate and
20 Stony Brook.

21 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY:
22 Particularly. And they have been -- of
23 course Downstate, as you mentioned, was
24 designated as a COVID-only hospital during

1 the pandemic, and it performed brilliantly as
2 a COVID-only hospital and we're very proud.
3 But it has had some lasting effects from that
4 designation that have resulted in lost
5 revenue, which have multiplied the problems
6 with the hospital.

7 SENATOR STAVISKY: All right, let me
8 quickly get to another topic, which is sort
9 of related to the first question that I
10 asked.

11 Your decline in enrollment obviously,
12 I think, has been affected by high school
13 students who somehow got lost in cyberspace
14 or something because they never enrolled in
15 the four-year or two-year institutions. And
16 that I think is rather pronounced, especially
17 at CUNY but also at SUNY.

18 Have you been working with either the
19 State Education Department or the local
20 school districts -- or some way -- to find
21 those students and perhaps have them
22 enrolling in some sort of program either at
23 the four-year or two-year institutions?

24 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY:

1 Absolutely. I think of -- during the
2 pandemic, most of the high schools were not
3 open. Students were remote. They were not
4 really face-to-face with their guidance
5 counselors.

6 So what we noticed throughout all the
7 of that -- and it really became a reality in
8 our application base -- that students were
9 not on the same course that they had been on
10 before, they were not getting the same
11 advice, because they were not physically
12 present, they were not queuing up in the same
13 way, they were not completing their
14 coursework the same way. Tests were not
15 being given that got them to the next level
16 in the same fashion. So everything was
17 really out of whack to get students ready for
18 college.

19 But certainly our community colleges
20 have stepped up and stepped into this breach
21 very strongly with -- with thinking through
22 ways to serve students when they come into
23 the community college system, to reduce
24 remediation courses so that students can see

1 themselves as learners that are proceeding,
2 that are really making advances on their
3 degree.

4 It's also dealing with Early College
5 High School and SUNY REACH -- there are other
6 programs that deal with a little bit older
7 learners that have been funded.

8 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you --

9 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Toby, I'm
10 sorry --

11 SENATOR STAVISKY: I don't want to get
12 yelled at, Chancellor.

13 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: -- but your clock
14 is off. So we're going to give you three
15 minutes for follow-up later on, okay?

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: Okay, I'll do that
17 later.

18 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you so
19 much.

20 Assembly.

21 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to the
23 ranker in Higher Ed, Assemblyman Walczyk.

24 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Thank you,

1 Madam Chair.

2 And Chancellor, wonderful to see you
3 once again. Enjoyed your leadership at SUNY
4 Oswego and look forward to working with you
5 here.

6 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Thank
7 you.

8 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: A quick question
9 that's non-budgetary.

10 COVID community testing sites, are you
11 still doing those on campuses and residential
12 halls and gymnasiums and that kind of thing?
13 And if so, when does that stop? When do you
14 anticipate those will be off your campuses?

15 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: When does
16 it stop, did you ask?

17 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Yup.

18 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well,
19 we're -- testing, of course, is still going
20 to be very important to us into the future.

21 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Yeah,
22 Chancellor, I mean specifically community
23 testing sites, not just for your students.

24 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Okay.

1 I'm not clear that there is an actual stop
2 date for any of the community -- the
3 community testing sites. So no stop date has
4 been issued. And we will continue to do that
5 in collaboration with our local departments
6 of health, especially. It's been very
7 important to our communities, especially with
8 Omicron, to go forward.

9 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Thanks.

10 The Excelsior Scholarship, is that --
11 did Governor Hochul continue that or have we
12 finally -- you know, right across the board,
13 I haven't heard a lot of great things
14 consistently about Excelsior. Is that still
15 in her presented budget or are we going to
16 finally get rid of it?

17 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: We have
18 about 20,000 students in Excelsior programs
19 across the system. And yes, she's continuing
20 it. As a matter of fact, she's brought it up
21 to date.

22 So, you know, Excelsior paid a certain
23 amount toward tuition which, when it was
24 originally proposed, was a little bit under

1 the tuition that SUNY actually charged. And
2 now the Governor is proposing to bring that
3 to a match to the tuition that SUNY is
4 charging. So it will be better for our
5 campuses, it certainly will be great for our
6 students.

7 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: The -- and
8 Chair Stavisky made the point enrollment is
9 down significantly. Is out-of-state tuition
10 something you would consider if we got a
11 piece of legislation, for example, for SUNY
12 Potsdam, to allow them to recruit some
13 Canadian hockey players? Is that something
14 that you think that we could do in the future
15 or in this budget?

16 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: And
17 compete with Oswego?

18 (Laughter.)

19 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Of course.

20 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well,
21 I'll have to think about that one. I'm not
22 sure. But -- but yes, you know --

23 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: The question is
24 really about out-of-state tuition incentives

1 that would allow some of the --

2 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Yeah,
3 it's always been possible. So the border
4 state issue, of course, it's always been
5 possible for campuses to deal with the
6 differential on their own. But it's a little
7 bit difficult if you don't have the reserves
8 or the revenue in place to be able to do so.
9 I think it bears looking at over and over and
10 over again.

11 We certainly are -- one of the
12 strategies for dealing with our enrollment
13 issues is to look out of state. And as we
14 look out of state, we're going to be
15 comparing what do we charge the students who
16 come in as out-of-state students. Is this
17 something that is a barrier to students
18 coming in? How does that compare to their
19 in-state tuition in the states they reside
20 in?

21 Those are the kinds of issues we're
22 going to be looking at. It's also going to
23 be true for international students.

24 So looking clear across the board, I'd

1 say the issue is really going to be -- hockey
2 aside -- it's really going to be about what
3 will literally incent those students to come.

4 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Great. And I
5 look forward to a continuing dialogue on
6 that. I appreciate your comments.

7 Chair Glick asked about something
8 that's I think going to be critically
9 important, and that's the master's-qualified
10 nurses pipeline to get some nursing trainers
11 into your institutions. And I know that's
12 something that's important to you and the
13 Governor moving forward.

14 I notice the Governor had 53 million
15 in incentives for faculty and recruitment.
16 How do we anticipate that that's going to
17 square up with collective bargaining and
18 incentives for -- how do you anticipate that
19 that's going to be used to get those
20 master's-qualified nurses so we can fix the
21 nursing pipeline?

22 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I'm not
23 sure how it would be affected by collective
24 bargaining. How would it -- we will -- we

1 will be -- certainly we have to have the
2 programs in place before we hire the faculty
3 for them and we opened it up for enrollment
4 in the nursing professions.

5 But I -- could you explain that a
6 little bit more?

7 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Probably not in
8 25 seconds, because I had one more question
9 that I wanted to ask, and it was to echo
10 Chair Glick's five-year capital plan. Do you
11 anticipate -- and I know you just got on the
12 job. But do you anticipate that you'll put
13 one out?

14 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: We hope
15 so. The five-year capital plan? Yes.

16 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Thanks so much.

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

18 We've been joined by Assemblywoman
19 Forrest.

20 And we send it back to the Senate.

21 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

22 Next we have Senator John Liu.

23 SENATOR LIU: Thank you, Madam Chair.

24 Thank you, Madam Chancellor, for

1 joining us.

2 I want to just piggyback off of what
3 my chairperson, Senator Stavisky, asked
4 about, which is the declining enrollment.
5 You cited a whole host of reasons why
6 enrollment at SUNY might be declining. I ask
7 you this question. Is it possible that the
8 cost of tuition is a factor in that declining
9 enrollment?

10 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, I
11 think it bears looking at. But in fact there
12 are declines in enrollment clear across
13 sectors. In fact, also for private
14 institutions across New York State. And the
15 private institutions charge much more. They
16 certainly can discount those tuitions, but
17 they charge much more. So they're not
18 declining --

19 SENATOR LIU: I understand that, Madam
20 Chancellor, that private institutions charge
21 more and they have declining enrollment. But
22 I would -- I think, as a matter of basic
23 economics, there's going to be some price
24 sensitivity even for potential SUNY students

1 which, you know, clearly SUNY is not nearly
2 as costly as some private institutions.

3 But I would think that there's some
4 price sensitivity. And it -- as you say, I
5 agree with you -- it bears looking at. The
6 former chancellor said that SUNY was looking
7 into it, and I wonder if there's any progress
8 made.

9 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Always
10 bears looking at. Tuition is a factor that
11 every family looks at when they make a
12 decision and every student looks at.

13 SENATOR LIU: Then please have your
14 team look at the price sensitivity.

15 And this goes to my real question,
16 which is that as we all know, the tuition has
17 been supporting more and more and more of
18 SUNY's ever-expanding operating costs. And
19 so SUNY tuition costs have risen in excess of
20 other budgetary items, including the amount
21 of state aid that's given to SUNY.

22 So what we need to do is reverse the
23 decades of disinvestment in SUNY and bring
24 tuition levels back to where they were.

1 Now, look, I went to SUNY when it was
2 \$675 a semester. Granted, that was a hundred
3 years ago, but at some point in time SUNY
4 tuition just skyrocketed, just took off,
5 just, you know, left -- even left the
6 stratosphere.

7 So what we need to do is get more
8 investment into SUNY. And it would be
9 helpful if you could have your team look at
10 the price sensitivity and also at what point
11 in time -- was there some kind of time
12 correlation between the rapid increase in the
13 tuition and the percentage of the operating
14 costs paid by tuition and the decline in
15 enrollment?

16 I think it would be helpful to see
17 that kind of pattern if it exists. I believe
18 it does exist. But SUNY for a long time now
19 has been talking about looking at that.

20 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, I
21 think you're right about data, that data can
22 inform our decisions. Looking at that will
23 be important and -- important factors for us
24 to consider as we consider all the factors

1 around enrollment. So we take to heart your
2 advice, and we will certainly roll that into
3 our computations.

4 SENATOR LIU: I'm heartened to hear
5 your comments about the proposed budget by
6 the Executive, and I'm heartened to see our
7 new Governor looking to put more money into
8 SUNY. I think it's desperately needed.

9 At the same time there are legislators
10 I know of in both chambers that are concerned
11 about SUNY's management. And I want to thank
12 you for -- you were about to start enjoying
13 your retirement and then they kind of like
14 dragged you back in two weeks into your
15 retirement. Congratulations, and thank you
16 for that.

17 My question, and please don't take
18 this personally --

19 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Senator, excuse
20 me. So we're having a problem with the time
21 clock, but I've been using my sturdy watch
22 and the three minutes has expired a short
23 while ago. So I think we're going to --

24 SENATOR LIU: Madam Chair, I was just

1 getting to the fun stuff. I didn't even know
2 I -- I felt like 45 seconds had transpired.

3 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: No, she was
4 correct, John. I was watching my watch as
5 well. Sorry.

6 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: I think the
7 clock is fixed. For your next question,
8 you'll be able to really see the clock.
9 Hopefully it's fixed now. We've been having
10 problems all day.

11 SENATOR LIU: Thank you.

12 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So we go now to
13 the Assembly, actually for five minutes to
14 Assemblyman Ra. Can we put -- got it. Okay.

15 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Thank you, Chair.

16 Good morning. I wanted to just get
17 into a couple of different issues, starting
18 with -- so the community college base aid and
19 the proposal to fund it at 100 percent of the
20 2021-'22 amount. Obviously it's better than,
21 you know, dealing with perhaps more of a
22 reduction due to the decreasing enrollment.
23 And obviously it's an increase over the
24 98 percent last year.

1 But I know there are proposals out
2 there to look at other years -- you know,
3 '19-'20, I think I saw one proposal. Others
4 have advocated for going and utilizing the
5 2018-2019, which was really the last year
6 unaffected by the pandemic.

7 So can you comment on that and what,
8 you know, these numbers actually mean in
9 terms of money in the system? Because if
10 we're basing it on a really down year that
11 really is the culmination of years of
12 enrollment decreases, I don't know that
13 that's sustainable funding for those
14 institutions.

15 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Yeah, we
16 definitely are interested in moving that
17 benchmark year back to pre-pandemic. I think
18 that it will be more rational and it will be
19 related more to reality if we move it back
20 and look at 100 percent.

21 And it will really restore the
22 community colleges to be able to look
23 forward. If we move back to the 2018-2019
24 year, that's about a \$37 million delta. So

1 we -- we would -- we're proposing that. And
2 we're hoping that that will be the case so we
3 can remove the pandemic from funding levels.

4 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: That would be great.
5 I know community colleges all over the state
6 would greatly benefit from utilizing that
7 benchmark. Certainly we would in
8 Nassau County, where I'm from.

9 The other thing I wanted to ask about,
10 and this has been a concern for many years,
11 the -- and it's great to see the Governor
12 investing in this area, the childcare centers
13 on campuses. And obviously in a budget where
14 we're investing in part-time TAP, you know,
15 this a central piece, I think, to that that
16 goes along with that, so that those part-time
17 students have access to that childcare that
18 they need to go to class.

19 So do we know, you know, or have a
20 list somewhere that could be provided of what
21 campuses would benefit from this increased
22 funding in terms of starting childcare
23 centers that don't currently have them?

24 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: So this

1 is start-up costs for about \$600,000 to start
2 a childcare center.

3 I don't have the list off, you know,
4 the top of mind here, but I'm sure we can get
5 the list of those campuses.

6 Yes, you are absolutely right.
7 Students benefit greatly from this,
8 especially single-parent households benefit
9 greatly from this. And we're interested in
10 seeing this happen.

11 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Okay, great.

12 And then the last thing I just
13 would -- in my remaining time -- obviously we
14 are now several years into the pandemic and
15 we have students who have finished their high
16 school years under these circumstances. I'm
17 just curious what SUNY is doing and what
18 maybe the Legislature ought to be looking at
19 in terms of providing resources to ensure
20 that that transition is going as well as
21 possible given that, you know, these students
22 either ended high school during a pandemic
23 and probably missed out on a lot of the
24 opportunities you normally have to make that

1 transition into college.

2 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, we
3 do see students come in with some emotional
4 problems and mental health issues, and it's
5 greater than it's ever been before. So
6 certainly the dollars that we will be
7 spending out of the federal stimulus and
8 other dollars put to this will be sorely
9 needed in order to help our students make the
10 transition and to succeed throughout their
11 college careers.

12 We also are looking at academic
13 deficiencies, but we don't have those data
14 yet. We have not amassed anything that shows
15 us that there is a great distinction between
16 students before the pandemic and after the
17 pandemic. So it is something we're looking
18 at, but we don't actually know the
19 differences yet.

20 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Thank you,
21 Chancellor.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: To the Senate.

23 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Apologies.

24 Next is our ranker on Higher

1 Education, Phil Boyle.

2 SENATOR BOYLE: Thank you,
3 Madam Chair.

4 And thank you, Chancellor, for joining
5 us today and also for this responsibility
6 you've taken on.

7 Just two quick points. One's a kind
8 of a comment, the other's a question. The
9 idea of having SUNY flagships, including
10 Stony Brook, I think is a tremendous idea.
11 I've advocated this for a long time, and I
12 think it would go a long way to improving and
13 helping the entire system for doing that.

14 My question regards what we see -- I
15 guess whether it's called cancel culture or
16 the silencing of open debate on our college
17 campuses, that's really been a tremendous
18 concern of mine over the past couple of
19 years.

20 Have you -- I don't know what you did
21 at Oswego or with your other colleagues to
22 make sure that everybody is allowed to say
23 what they are for an open and honest
24 discussion without being concerned about

1 losing their job as a professor, getting
2 canceled as a student. And regardless of
3 which side of the political spectrum they're
4 on, to have an open, honest debate.

5 And how would you see yourself or any
6 ideas about some policies that may protect
7 our professors and our students in these
8 difficult times?

9 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well,
10 college campuses are a place where there's a
11 marketplace of ideas. Free speech is
12 absolutely essential to learning. Academic
13 freedom is also part of this. What goes on
14 in the classroom is very important.

15 You know, we're always pushing the
16 limits. This is higher education. Higher
17 education at its best is always at the end of
18 the envelope, you know? Faculty members as
19 well as students want to get to what can I do
20 and how far can I take it? So it's a great
21 place to be.

22 I think our campuses are really good
23 at this. Our campuses in SUNY are excellent
24 at kind of threading this needle of making

1 sure that the campus is safe, providing for
2 safety for lectures and presentations and
3 such and making sure there won't be anything
4 happening that could have the campus be
5 unsafe for our students or for any of our
6 visitors, but also allowing free speech,
7 allowing students to have the speakers they
8 want, allowing students to have the debates
9 that they want, and faculty members to
10 express themselves inside and outside of the
11 classroom.

12 There are limits, of course, and
13 that's when -- that's when -- you look at it
14 more carefully, the press looks at it more
15 closely and we all get to decide one way or
16 another. Sometimes it ends up in court,
17 sometimes it doesn't. But in fact I think
18 even that is an expression of what our
19 country's all about. We go at different
20 opinions in different ways. This is what we
21 need to do in higher education.

22 So as long as we are allowing people
23 to present their ideas, debate their ideas,
24 that's where we should be.

1 I know at Oswego -- it's not always
2 easy to do. You know, you stand up generally
3 for the underdog. But sometimes you've got
4 to go the opposite direction because free
5 speech demands it. And then your campus is
6 not quite as understanding.

7 We have some outside agencies that
8 take a look at what's happening on the
9 college campuses, like FIRE, and give us kind
10 of a grade or a ranking as to how we're
11 doing.

12 So we have many factors we take into
13 consideration when we're moving forward.

14 Is there a particular issue you wanted
15 to talk about?

16 SENATOR BOYLE: No, just generally,
17 you know, on campuses around the country I
18 see many times when, say, a conservative
19 speaker is going to -- was invited to speak
20 and then the students break the windows and
21 they -- you know, whatever they do in terms
22 of getting the point across that they don't
23 want that speaker on campus, and suddenly the
24 invitation is revoked.

1 I have not seen that at SUNY, I'm
2 happy to see that. But the mob mentality
3 cannot hold sway. And it's the same -- true
4 with a liberal speaker. I think everyone
5 should have an opportunity to come and speak
6 and not be canceled or disinvited if what
7 they're going to say may not be too popular
8 among the masses.

9 So I'm glad to hear that you feel that
10 way, and I'm sure that you're going to show
11 us great leadership in protecting all open --
12 ideas on all sides going forward. So I
13 appreciate it very much.

14 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Thank
15 you.

16 SENATOR BOYLE: Thank you, Madam
17 Chair.

18 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

19 Back to you, Assembly.

20 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Assemblywoman
21 Bichotte Hermelyn for three minutes.

22 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BICHOTTE HERMELYN:
23 Thank you so much, Chair.

24 How are you, Chancellor? Thank you

1 for being here. I am a proud SUNY alum,
2 Buffalo State College and Buffalo University.
3 So I'm happy to have seen over the years that
4 we've had some progress, especially around
5 the elimination around TAP gap, maintenance
6 of effort, issues being addressed in a higher
7 budget to hire more professors.

8 I do have a few questions that I'd
9 like to ask, once, and then you can answer it
10 in order.

11 The first one is around recidivism.
12 And I know you talked a little bit about the
13 TAP program for incarcerated individuals.
14 And you know that it's commonly understood
15 that college access dramatically decreases
16 recidivism. And there's actually a new study
17 out of Yale University focusing on this.

18 Can you describe your understanding
19 and how and whether these programs impact
20 recidivism? And how will it be implemented
21 in the State of New York SUNY systems?

22 My second question is around the
23 childcare centers. For the 18 campuses that
24 do not have childcare centers, can you just

1 expand on what's the plan for that? And
2 where do you plan to build the centers.

3 And then lastly, on the capital -- the
4 five-year capital plan, do you have -- will
5 your five-year capital plan include MWBE
6 efforts, which is minority and women business
7 enterprise.

8 But the first question is around
9 recidivism, if you can answer that.

10 Thank you.

11 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I don't
12 have statistics, but I've been around a long
13 time so I remember when SUNY was in the
14 prisons before. And so there's been a break,
15 we haven't been there. We're going back to
16 be able to teach in the prison system.

17 And I know it was successful to a
18 certain degree before. I expect it to be
19 successful again. It is -- you know, when
20 you talk about human rights, when you talk
21 about treatment of prisoners, when you talk
22 about all of the reforms that you've been
23 seeing about incarceration and about what it
24 means to be incarcerated, who should be

So we're very much in favor of this.

STUDENT ADVOCATE HAMILTON: So we do
that 21 of our SUNY campuses are now
going with the correctional facilities and
currently serving 500 students who are
incarcerated. So the goal is certainly to
use those numbers moving forward.

And we'll be keeping data about --

CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you. The

1 time has expired.

2 If you could respond -- you know, and
3 there probably may be some other questions
4 that members have that there won't be time to
5 respond to at the hearing. If you could
6 respond in writing to both myself and Senator
7 Krueger's office, and we will distribute it
8 to all members who are participating so they
9 can hear the answer.

10 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: We will.

11 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So now we go to
12 the Senate.

13 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Senator Jim
14 Gaughran.

15 SENATOR GAUGHRAN: Thank you,
16 Madam Chair.

17 And as others have said, Chancellor,
18 thank you so much for stepping up during
19 these very challenging times. We're very
20 grateful for that.

21 I want to get back to the three SUNY
22 hospitals. I'm very concerned about the need
23 for much more support. And in terms of --
24 we've already raised the issue of the debt

1 service, and I'm just hoping that, you know,
2 you can help us in really advocating for
3 getting rid of that, because it really makes
4 no sense that, you know, everybody else is
5 relieved of this. And our hospital -- these
6 hospitals have stepped up, in addition to
7 being, obviously, important safety net
8 hospitals, they are the institutions that
9 this state uses to make sure that we're
10 getting our best and brightest doctors,
11 nurses and healthcare professionals ready for
12 tomorrow. And, you know, the Governor has
13 put a big focus on more of this.

14 So what do you think could be done
15 to -- you know, basically taking this off the
16 plate of the three hospitals? And also
17 the -- you know, the huge fringe costs that
18 they have and the competition, you know, that
19 they have with recruiting other people. How
20 can we just eliminate this so that they have
21 these funds available for educational and
22 health services?

23 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: So the
24 funds -- certainly the hospitals need an

1 infusion of funds. All of the hospitals are
2 not exactly alike. They have different --
3 they have expressed their missions in
4 different ways and they have different
5 situations, given through the pandemic that
6 they've done different things.

7 SUNY Downstate, as we've said before,
8 was a COVID-only hospital, and they have in
9 fact some lasting effects from that, of lost
10 revenue. And of course SUNY Stony Brook has
11 served a great many patients during the
12 pandemic, often up to I think 6,000 patients
13 in a week. So we have had a great impact on
14 that hospital.

15 Upstate, of course, has been involved
16 in research. They've developed the saliva
17 test. They are part of the Pfizer -- they're
18 investigators, principal investigators for
19 the Pfizer vaccines. So they're --

20 SENATOR GAUGHRAN: No, I agree. I
21 appreciate that.

22 But I just want to ask you one quick
23 question before my time clock runs out, and
24 that is the Governor -- there's this huge

1 \$10 billion overall in healthcare in addition
2 to the education budget. Have there been
3 some discussions -- and can there be -- that
4 these three SUNY hospitals also get, you
5 know, a significant share of that money as
6 well?

7 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: We are --
8 we are assuming that they will get a
9 significant share of that money as well for
10 faculty and staff, yes.

11 SENATOR GAUGHRAN: Maybe
12 infrastructure? So if you could maybe
13 provide more details on that to us --

14 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: We will.
15 We will.

16 SENATOR GAUGHRAN: -- that would be
17 great. I appreciate that.

18 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I'm sorry
19 that I don't have that at my fingertips, but
20 we will provide it for you.

21 SENATOR GAUGHRAN: No, that's fine. I
22 appreciate it. Thank you so much.

23 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.
24 Assembly.

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
2 Assemblyman Smullen, three minutes.

3 ASSEMBLYMAN SMULLEN: Thank you very
4 much, Chair. I really appreciate it.

5 Chancellor, nice to see you.

6 Now, the Governor is proposing to move
7 the College of Nanoscale Science and
8 Engineering from SUNY Poly to SUNY Albany.
9 And a couple of quick questions there.

10 Why does the Governor feel this move
11 is necessary at this time?

12 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, we
13 don't know exactly why the Governor feels
14 it's necessary. We're looking at all of the
15 issues surrounding it.

16 It sounds and looks pretty good to put
17 a research institute with the research
18 College of Nanoscience and Engineering. But
19 also SUNY Poly of course has a great deal to
20 connect with those endeavors as well. So
21 we're looking at the scope of all of it, and
22 for our students, for our research base, for
23 or connections to industry. All of these
24 things will be very important as we move

1 forward.

2 I assume that that's what the Governor
3 looked at, that, you know, as we elevate
4 it --

5 ASSEMBLYMAN SMULLEN: Excuse me.

6 Now, you didn't suggest this, this
7 came from the second floor?

8 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Yes.

9 ASSEMBLYMAN SMULLEN: Okay. So the
10 second question on that. I represent
11 Herkimer and Oneida counties. Will there be
12 any impact of this relocation on the local
13 economy in the Utica area?

14 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: We hope
15 not. We know that -- you know, we are all
16 SUNY and we share programs, we share ideas,
17 we work together, we collaborate. We believe
18 the same collaborations that are in place
19 today will be the collaborations that will be
20 in place no matter what happens with the
21 formal connections that will be made.

22 ASSEMBLYMAN SMULLEN: Okay. But this
23 isn't part of an overall, then -- a
24 reorganization of the SUNY system, this is

1 something to make it easier for an
2 administrative reason?

3 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Not
4 administrative reasons. I think it really
5 has to do with responding to industry need.
6 It has to do with responding to the needs of
7 research. We have premier institutions here.
8 And as we highlight them and we move them
9 forward, we're not leaving SUNY Poly behind.

10 We haven't sat down to look at all of
11 the factors yet. And we want to bring all of
12 the institutions to the table to take a look
13 at what this will mean and make it additive
14 for every campus so that there will not be
15 any loss.

16 ASSEMBLYMAN SMULLEN: That's great. I
17 really appreciate that. We want to get the
18 organization right. We want the institution
19 to really -- to prosper and to really take
20 things into the 21st century. So, you know,
21 at least from my perspective we're fully
22 supportive of efforts to make it the very
23 best we can for New York.

24 Thank you.

1 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Thank
2 you.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Back to the
4 Senate.

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you very
6 much.

7 The ranker, Tom O'Mara. Finance
8 Ranker Tom O'Mara.

9 SENATOR O'MARA: Good morning.

10 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Hello.

11 SENATOR O'MARA: And welcome. And
12 thank you for your service at SUNY Oswego.
13 You did an outstanding job there for many
14 years. And congratulations on your
15 appointment here.

16 Are you seeking the full appointment
17 to this position?

18 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I'm
19 seeking sunshine, relaxation. I think my
20 husband is listening in on this broadcast,
21 and -- no I am not. I am not. I am not.

22 But I love SUNY, and I'm happy to
23 serve. I'm here for a particular purpose.
24 And I'm thrilled to be able to play that

1 role.

2 SENATOR O'MARA: Well, I'm glad you
3 are. And I wish you were looking to stay on
4 as well, but I fully understand.

5 With regards to the expansion of TAP
6 for part-time students, is this going to
7 include non-credit career and technical
8 workforce development programs for
9 individuals taking those?

10 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I'm not
11 sure if it does include the non-credit.

12 It potentially will include the
13 non-credit. We haven't -- I don't think
14 we've actually looked at it yet.

15 SENATOR O'MARA: Okay. Well, I would
16 certainly advocate that it is included and
17 that you further encourage the workforce
18 development needs that we have across
19 New York State. And I think that would be a
20 help in doing that.

21 With regards to the Excelsior program,
22 are there any changes being made or any
23 leeway given to those students in the
24 Excelsior Scholarship Program with regards to

INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Last year there was accommodation for full-time status. I don't think that will go forward with the Excelsior program. I think we'll get back on track with it.

SENATOR O'MARA: Well, no, I am as well. I've just heard from some students in my district that have concerns over either some poor performance because of COVID around exam time or whatever. So I hope there's some accommodations being made for those that were impacted by that.

The capital budget for SUNY. How much

1 is in the capital budget for the movement,
2 under New York's Green New Deal -- for the
3 lessening of emissions from all buildings,
4 certainly including SUNY buildings? What's
5 in the capital budget for that?

6 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I'm not
7 sure I know that. Bob, do you?

8 SUNY INTERIM CFO MEGNA: I think it's
9 nested within our overall budget that we take
10 in those requirements. There's no specific
11 piece, but we are subject to all of the same
12 requirements that other state construction
13 projects are subject to.

14 SENATOR O'MARA: Do you have any
15 estimates or cost studies, feasibility
16 studies for the conversation of SUNY
17 buildings to zero emissions?

18 SUNY INTERIM CFO MEGNA: Yeah, we'll
19 certainly provide those.

20 I think, again, this is something that
21 happens over time. Right? So there's a
22 process that begins we make sure that we're
23 hitting the guidelines we're supposed to hit
24 now. And I think it's built into our

1 estimates of how much we're going to need for
2 critical maintenance in future years to
3 continue to hit what we have to hit.

4 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: And
5 they're usually rolled right into the
6 project.

7 So what happens is -- you know, a few
8 years ago we would kind of break out what
9 would the project be without geothermal
10 wells, what would the project be with
11 geothermal wells? And you would kind of make
12 a decision, are you going to go for that
13 carbon-neutral and get into the higher rate
14 for the project, or are you not?

15 And right now, because SUNY is
16 requiring that we take a -- and we make a
17 plan for moving to net zero carbons that we
18 roll those into the project and we don't take
19 them out as stand-out costs. So it's
20 difficult to break them out --

21 SENATOR O'MARA: I think that
22 New Yorkers who are footing the bill for what
23 are going to be outrageous expenses in these
24 conversions deserve to know, and I advocate

1 that that be set out and what the costs are
2 going to be going forward.

3 So my time is up. Thank you very
4 much.

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you, Tom.
6 Assembly?

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
8 Assemblyman Epstein.

9 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you,
10 Chair.

11 And thank you, Interim Chancellor.

12 I know I only have three minutes, so
13 if we could -- a couple of questions we could
14 do quickly.

15 Can you commit to getting publicly
16 available charging stations on all SUNY
17 campuses?

18 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I beg
19 your pardon? Can you say that again?

20 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Can you commit
21 to getting publicly available charging
22 stations for E-vehicles on all SUNY campuses?

23 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, it
24 sounds like a great idea. I think a lot of

1 campuses already have charging stations on
2 them. I'm not sure how many campuses have
3 them, though. So we'll get back to you on
4 that --

5 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you.

6 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: -- and
7 see what the feasibility would be of having
8 them on every campus.

9 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Can you commit
10 to ensuring that as you're interim
11 chancellor, that all new vehicles that you
12 buy for the SUNY system will be EV or, you
13 know, low-carbon?

14 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I'd like
15 to commit to that. I'm going to take a look
16 at what that is. We are looking at a lot of
17 initiatives on low-carbon, and it will be one
18 that I look at. I'm not going to commit to
19 it today, but I will get back to you on it if
20 I do.

21 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Okay, I'd love
22 to hear back from you about it. Because
23 obviously this is -- we're all part of our
24 CLCPA goals, including our SUNY system. So

1 I'd appreciate it.

2 So we saw that \$2 million for students
3 with disabilities was included in the
4 Governor's proposed state budget, but you
5 know, the SED requested \$15 million for
6 students with disabilities.

7 I'm hoping we can work with you to
8 increase that number from the 2 million
9 currently in the budget to the 15 million
10 that the State Education Department needs for
11 our students with disabilities. Can we work
12 with your office on that?

13 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Yes.
14 It's not released by SED at this point, the
15 \$2 million, but we of course have need and
16 would be able to use that.

17 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Wonderful.
18 That's wonderful.

19 So there's been an issue with the
20 student activities fee. Students have really
21 relied on their budget through SUNY and CUNY
22 as a separate set-aside for student activity
23 dollars so the Student Assembly can, like, do
24 the activities they need to do statewide.

1 Can we have a conversation offline
2 around trying to have a set-aside student
3 activity fee for the Student Assembly so they
4 can get the resources that they need?

5 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I'm
6 sorry, I didn't catch that.

7 (Off the record.)

8 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Sure. I
9 mean, we are -- we're in contact with the
10 Student Assembly, we're looking at their
11 needs. We just made available to them a
12 full-time staff person that will help them
13 with their administrative duties that we are
14 paying for on the SUNY side.

15 So, you know, we're interested in the
16 Student Assembly being successful. It's
17 really important for students to have a voice
18 and a conduit.

19 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: And one last
20 question just on the TAP dollars for
21 incarcerated folks.

22 Can we get a sense of where you are
23 around the nonprofit schools like Bard Prison
24 program and other programs versus, you know,

1 there might be for-profit colleges, other
2 ones who might want to work with that
3 population? I want to make sure that we
4 commit to really degree-granting programs if
5 we -- as we move forward to TAP for people
6 who are incarcerated.

7 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I'm
8 sorry, can you say that again?

9 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Yeah. So we're
10 going to make --

11 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: There's a
12 little bit of a wobble in the voice.

13 (Off the record.)

14 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: And making sure
15 that they have degree-granting programs like
16 Bard Prison Program and other institutions,
17 versus some for-profit institutions or online
18 colleges that, you know, may want to try to
19 get access to the student population.

20 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: So we
21 will have certainly degree-granting programs
22 available for incarcerated individuals.
23 We're going to be working on what's most
24 appropriate and what would be most sought

1 after. And we will be, you know, hopefully
2 working on a cohort basis to get students
3 through those programs so that they can have
4 the -- whatever the certificate is or the
5 credential that's associated with it.

6 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

8 Back to the Senate.

9 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you very
10 much.

11 We have Robert Jackson, Senator RJ.

12 SENATOR JACKSON: Yeah, I'm here.

13 Chancellor, good afternoon. So I have
14 only three minutes, so I'm going to try to
15 move pretty quick.

16 I've heard that -- whoa. I'm so
17 sorry. Can you hear me?

18 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Yes.

19 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Yes.

20 SUNY INTERIM CFO MEGNA: Yes.

21 SENATOR JACKSON: So I've heard from
22 students that one of the reasons why children
23 are not enrolling in colleges is because of
24 the debt that they're going to incur when

1 they finish school. Have you heard that at
2 all? What are you hearing about that?

3 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I think
4 it's possible. Certainly it's a scary
5 proposition for many individuals that they
6 would have to leave school with debt.

7 So, you know, we're looking at this in
8 a lot of different ways. But we should
9 know -- and I think we never talk about the
10 fact -- that almost 50 percent of our
11 students leave SUNY with a credential, a
12 degree in hand, without any debt. So I think
13 we should be aware of that.

14 For those individuals who do leave
15 with debt, though, it is about an average of
16 \$24,000 total. And that's pretty steep for
17 students. So we're attacking this in many
18 ways, trying to deal with it up-front and
19 talk with students about financial matters
20 before they even do that.

21 SENATOR JACKSON: Chancellor, I'm
22 sorry to cut you short. I'm just trying to
23 get two questions in before my time is up, if
24 you don't mind. I'm not trying to be rude to

1 you at all, okay? Please understand that.

2 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Okay.

3 SENATOR JACKSON: But during the lower
4 education hearings, upstate and downstate
5 school district leaderships voiced their
6 concern with SUNY as a charter authorizer.
7 Do you believe that SUNY should have
8 authority over charter schools within
9 New York City when CUNY is the state
10 institution system for that reason? Does
11 SUNY speak with local districts when
12 reviewing charter school requests to see
13 potential impact on local schools?

14 That's the question.

15 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, I
16 leave this in the hands of the Board of
17 Trustees. The trustees have been dealing
18 with this for almost 20 years. And I know
19 they know much more about it than I at this
20 point. And so I will leave that question in
21 the hands of the trustees. And if you need
22 more information, we'll get back to you.

23 SENATOR JACKSON: Got it, thank you.

24 And my last question, the Governor

1 proposed to prohibit withholding transcripts
2 for failure to pay student-related debt. An
3 institution in violation of this will be
4 subject to a \$500 fine per violation.

5 What is the average debt per student
6 within your system? And do institutions
7 withhold transcripts for minor debts such as
8 parking tickets and library fees?

9 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: The
10 average debt that students leave campus with
11 is about \$24,000.

12 But I totally agree that we should not
13 be withholding transcripts, we should not
14 keep students from registering, we should not
15 keep them out of extracurricular activities.
16 We should not use the SUNY cudgel in order to
17 keep students away from proper activities
18 while they are still students if they owe
19 minor amounts of money while they're
20 students.

21 We certainly have the right to collect
22 those debts, but we shouldn't use an undue
23 influence or heavy bargaining power in order
24 to get those debts paid.

1 And I'm 100 percent in favor of what's
2 happened with the transcripts.

3 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you,
4 Chancellor. My time is up. I appreciate
5 you.

6 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you,
7 Robert.

8 Assembly.

9 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes, we go to
10 Assemblywoman Fahy next.

11 ASSEMBLYWOMAN FAHY: Hi. I think I'm
12 on. Chancellor, wonderful to see you. Thank
13 you. Thank you for stepping in and, as was
14 commented, coming out of retirement.

15 And a huge thanks to the Governor as
16 well for what is a very encouraging budget.

17 So I have just a few comments, and I
18 have two questions. So I just want to weigh
19 in -- I know you've been hit with a lot, but
20 I want to weigh in so that I'm echoing some
21 of what you heard today.

22 Operating dollars for SUNY are
23 incredibly important, and we do hope to see
24 more. So pleased with the TAP gap, the

1 part-time TAP. And TAP for the incarcerated,
2 very pleased.

3 The five-year plan matters to us. I
4 need to put in a huge plug for the 20 million
5 for the UAlbany engineering building that
6 we've been asking for for probably a half
7 dozen years now. I'm hoping this is the
8 year. The building is -- I'm a little tired
9 of seeing the fence up around what is an old
10 Albany high school -- old Albany high school,
11 the Schuyler building, and would really
12 reinvigorate an entire neighborhood.

13 Absolutely support your comments and
14 appreciate your comments on new faculty and
15 trying to get to 500. Pleased again with the
16 EOP increase and the community -- I think
17 it's very important that we have a community
18 college floor. I wouldn't be here without
19 the community college I attended as a
20 first-generation American. So I do think
21 it's important that we have those avenues as
22 well as some of the certificate programs that
23 you yourself mentioned.

24 And a couple of things. The flagship.

1 Pleased with the proposal for a flagship on
2 two of the colleges, on Stony Brook and
3 Buffalo. But as you know, we think it's a
4 great idea. We want to expand it to four.
5 We think it's absolutely essential that it be
6 four. UAlbany and Binghamton have always
7 been university centers. Why not showcase,
8 as we showcase all of SUNY, but why not
9 continue to showcase those four university
10 centers.

11 Question. We are pleased with the
12 proposal for re-merging CSNE, the Nano
13 College, with UAlbany. The question is how
14 can we make this a win/win? We're certainly
15 not trying to -- a lot of effort has been put
16 into SUNY Poly in Utica. We recognize the
17 potential there for some semiconductor
18 businesses near Syracuse. How can we make
19 this a win/win?

20 I know you can't maybe answer that in
21 20 seconds, but we want to continue that
22 conversation because we support it. But I'll
23 try to give you those few seconds. Thank
24 you, Chancellor.

1 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I
2 think -- thank you. I think what we can do
3 is bring Poly to the table and listen
4 carefully about what will make it a win/win.
5 We need to roll their opinions into this
6 strategy to see what will make this happen
7 and happen in the best way possible.

8 As I said, we're looking for additur,
9 we're not looking to hurt any of our fine,
10 wonderful institutions.

11 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.
12 To the Senate.

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN FAHY: Thank you, Chair.
14 Thank you, Chancellor.

15 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you,
16 Assembly.

17 Next up is Senator Sue Serino.

18 SENATOR SERINO: Thank you,
19 Chairwoman. Hello, Chancellor. You know,
20 we've had a lot of discussions about mental
21 health throughout all of these hearings. And
22 I apologize if somebody had asked you this
23 already, but I was just wondering what's
24 included in the budget to help address the

1 mental health challenges I think that our
2 SUNY and CUNY students face today.

3 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: In the
4 budget -- well, you know that we have a lot
5 of -- we are charged to use, on our campuses,
6 some of the federal stimulus money for mental
7 health on our campuses. So \$24 million will
8 be applied to mental health from the federal
9 stimulus packages, and \$1 million will be
10 continued from the budget.

11 So we're going to put all of that
12 together. It's -- you know, we've been
13 moving forward on these issues. We've had a
14 task force in place for the last two years,
15 and it finally reported out. I was one of
16 the cochairs on that task force, with
17 Dr. Wayne Riley from Downstate Medical.
18 COVID -- COVID made us wait a bit to get our
19 final recommendations in place, but once we
20 got our final recommendations in place, we've
21 been moving forward.

22 You know, we have moved forward on
23 telehealth, it's been very successful. It
24 was with Upstate Medical and now we will also

1 have a location in Downstate Medical. And
2 that's a 24/7 counseling service that is a
3 remote counseling service that students
4 absolutely love and take advantage of to the
5 maximum.

6 So we're going to expand that. That's
7 going to be really wonderful for our
8 students. We're of course going to hire --

9 SENATOR SERINO: That's great,
10 Chancellor. Oh, sorry. Because maybe I can
11 follow up with you on that, because I'm going
12 to run out of time and I want to make sure I
13 can ask you -- I have two more questions, if
14 you don't mind. But I would love to continue
15 the conversation with you, because this is
16 something that's really important to me.

17 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Okay.

18 SENATOR SERINO: But my other question
19 is, you know, while higher education of
20 course is very important, it's not
21 necessarily the path that every student wants
22 to take.

23 Do you think that SUNY could play
24 maybe a bigger role through partnerships in

1 bolstering Career and Technical Education?

2 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I think
3 so. I think with P-TECH and Early College
4 High School I think that we are playing a
5 bigger and bigger role. And with
6 apprenticeships we are playing a bigger and
7 bigger role. And certainly the community
8 colleges are stepping up into these roles.

9 We have graduated more than
10 300 students with P-TECH degrees. They
11 identify in high school. It's a six-year
12 program. They go right into careers that are
13 designated. This is an important piece for
14 an educated populace.

15 SENATOR SERINO: Thank you. And I
16 also -- you know, recently I heard from EMS
17 first responders in my district who complete
18 their continuing education through Dutchess
19 Community College and who are opposed to the
20 booster mandate.

21 You know, these individuals have been
22 on the frontlines since the start of the
23 pandemic, and they are currently vaccinated.
24 You must wear masks to attend. The program

1 they attend would bring them to campus for
2 about three to five sessions, and classes are
3 usually only about 10 students. So for these
4 reasons, they feel the booster requirement is
5 kind of onerous, especially at a time when
6 COVID numbers are rapidly declining.

7 And at a time when faculty and vendors
8 are exempt from this booster requirement, how
9 do you justify requiring it for attendees of
10 programs like this that are so vitally
11 important?

12 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well,
13 we're relying on the experts. We have an
14 expert panel in SUNY that has helped us come
15 to our decisions about what we require and is
16 made up of researchers and doctors. They
17 guide us in making our decisions. So we're
18 relying on that going forward.

19 Hopefully we -- and we reassess it.
20 So we will be reassessing as the numbers of
21 perhaps Omicron come down, or if we move to
22 no variant in the near future, we hope, we
23 will make some changes in what we require.
24 But for now the booster requirement stays.

1 SENATOR SERINO: It's kind of like a
2 slap in the face that faculty doesn't have
3 to, yet the people that are coming here for
4 these vital services do. So I could hope
5 that it's reconsidered.

6 And I know I ran out of time. Sorry,
7 Senator Krueger.

8 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: That's okay. You
9 were pretty close. Thank you.

10 Assemblywoman.

11 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Assemblyman
12 Bronson.

13 ASSEMBLYMAN BRONSON: Good afternoon,
14 Chancellor. How nice to see you. And want
15 you to know that we miss you tremendously at
16 SUNY Oswego.

17 My question was just asked by the
18 Senator. As you know, I'm very involved in
19 mental health issues, and you and I have
20 spoken about that in connection with Oswego.
21 So I'm glad to see the \$24 million of federal
22 stimulus dollars. A little bit disappointed
23 that there's only 1 million in state funds.
24 As we go forward, we need to increase that.

1 But could you just tell us a little
2 bit more about the task force and some of the
3 findings to help us meet the needs of mental
4 health services for our students?

5 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, the
6 task force was eye-opening. I mean, we
7 really set about trying to assess where were
8 there services on campuses for mental health.
9 And we found it's really uneven throughout
10 SUNY.

11 Some of the campuses have no SUNY
12 services, they rely on the municipal services
13 or county services around them. But they do
14 have good coverage from those services, and
15 they have great collaboration with those
16 entities.

17 So we saw that there is a possibility
18 for every student to have an avenue to mental
19 health. But we needed to put in place a lot
20 of things. We wanted to take away the stigma
21 for gaining mental health counseling. We
22 wanted to increase the counseling itself. We
23 wanted to make it just in time, 24/7,
24 students being able to contact and have

1 services remotely. We wanted to be able to
2 assess the students.

3 So we have what we call -- we have put
4 in place Thriving Campus, which is a program
5 across the university that is a triage
6 program that connects students with services
7 in their communities, so -- with providers in
8 their communities.

9 So we're trying to cover the map as
10 far as mental health services are concerned.

11 We're also seeing the need for
12 training on college campuses, for faculty and
13 staff to become more aware of what is
14 necessary. The QPR training for suicide
15 prevention -- question, persuade and refer --
16 which is incredibly important, has really
17 covered the map. I mean, there are thousands
18 of people within SUNY who have been trained
19 in the QPR training at this point. And we
20 continue to do that.

21 But we need to do more. We need to
22 keep on it. We need to make sure the
23 funding's available. And we need to ask for
24 funding every year on this matter.

1 ASSEMBLYMAN BRONSON: Yeah, I
2 certainly will be with you asking for
3 additional funds, because meeting the needs
4 of mental health for our students is one of
5 those wraparound services that are essential
6 for them to be successful, to get their
7 degrees and to move forward.

8 So thank you so much, Chancellor. So
9 nice to see you.

10 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Nice to
11 see you too.

12 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Back to the
13 Senate.

14 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you very
15 much.

16 Hi, Chancellor. Nice to see you.
17 I've just been asked by a couple of people
18 who aren't on the committees whether I can
19 ask a few questions for them.

20 The first one -- and you partly
21 answered before, but I didn't quite put it in
22 context. Question one, has the -- and I
23 don't know that you'll know this, in which
24 case please just get back to Chair Weinstein

1 and I, and we'll pass the information along.

2 Has the ratio of administrators to
3 full-time faculty changed dramatically in the
4 last 10 years? There seems to be a belief
5 that both university systems have really
6 upped the number of administrators while not
7 upping the number of faculty.

8 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I don't
9 know if I have that number exactly. I -- I
10 don't think so. We'll get back to you with
11 it.

12 I will tell you that I was a faculty
13 member for 11 years. I believed that as
14 well. And that was back in the eighties.

15 But -- so it is --

16 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: If we go back 20
17 or 30 years, it's probably a little harder,
18 yeah.

19 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Yeah.

20 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I didn't mean to
21 cut you off, sorry.

22 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: No,
23 that's -- you know, we need to know. I know
24 we know it. I don't know it at this point.

1 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay. I
2 appreciate that.

3 And then following through also,
4 several of my colleagues have asked you about
5 the costs of universities and whether that
6 has an impact on the students coming or not
7 coming.

8 But do we think or does research show
9 that the ratio of full-time-equivalent
10 faculty to students actually impacts the
11 reasons people go to SUNY or not? I know
12 that private colleges market themselves based
13 on the ratio of faculty to students. So I
14 think they think it matters. And I'm curious
15 what you think.

16 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: You know,
17 I don't think there's data that shows that
18 students come or don't come because of that
19 ratio.

20 We do know there are some data points
21 that show that students are retained or
22 graduate more on time or find themselves in
23 the careers of their choice due to more
24 full-time faculty.

1 So we're moving on those quality
2 issues, those student success issues, as well
3 as whether or not they come to the
4 institution because of full-time faculty.

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: And it's been a
6 pet peeve of mine for many years that even
7 the least-qualified proprietary schools --
8 I'm not attacking all proprietary schools,
9 before I get yelled at again. But there are
10 unqualified proprietary schools that are
11 drawing down a large sum of student money and
12 then don't give them the education they need.

13 And when you ask students why they
14 would head into those programs only to not
15 get the education they need and lose the
16 money they have, they tell you it's because
17 they were so helpful on the front end, having
18 them fill out the paperwork for them,
19 promising them they would direct them through
20 to make sure they took the right classes.

21 Are there lessons we ought to be
22 learning here for SUNY and CUNY, that if we
23 are more helpful at the front end, helping
24 people maximize, you know, the benefits that

1 they're eligible for and decrease the costs
2 and help direct students, particularly
3 first-generation Americans or first
4 generation going to college who have no one
5 at home to advise them -- that if we did a
6 better job at the front end advising, we
7 would get more students and more students who
8 actually headed into the right classes?
9 What's your opinion?

10 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY:

11 Absolutely, I agree with you.

12 I think you'll see that the pandemic
13 really hurt us in this regard. I think some
14 of the programs of where we had either
15 admissions counselors or faculty connect with
16 prospective students and help them understand
17 what the programs are about, what the careers
18 are at the end of the programs, how you
19 maximize your time at the institution, how
20 you can work with individuals to leap over
21 those barriers to get into the institution --
22 a lot of those things fell away from SUNY.

23 So they are in play as we start to
24 look at what are the factors that are

1 impacting our enrollment at this point.

2 I've worked with a professional over
3 the last year and a half on enrollment
4 issues, and one of the things we attacked for
5 SUNY Oswego was this -- as you say, this
6 personal contact and having this feeling of
7 confidence that someone will help them when
8 necessary. It made quite a bit of difference
9 in the number of applications that we
10 received for the institution. And
11 establishing that contact again, making that
12 connection, made all of the difference.

13 So it will be one of the things we
14 really look at very carefully. We're looking
15 for best practices. We're looking for what
16 really yields not only applications, but
17 students who will make deposits and come to
18 the institutions.

19 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you. And
20 thank you for being willing to jump into this
21 very important and challenging position when
22 at least rumor has it some members of your
23 family thought you had another plan in mind.

24 Thank you. I cede back my time.

1 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Thank
2 you.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
4 Assemblywoman Simon.

5 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Thank you.

6 Good morning, Chancellor, and thank
7 you again for your service and your
8 willingness to step up at this critical time.

9 I have a couple of questions. First
10 of all, let me just say, in the spirit of
11 full disclosure, I did not go to SUNY -- but
12 my sister did. And, you know, she was a
13 neonatal intensive-care nurse. And so I know
14 the issue of nursing education and capacity
15 and nursing educators is one that we're all
16 concerned about. And I'd like to ask your
17 thoughts on that.

18 I also want to address a couple of
19 issues about technology, which is largely
20 capital issues. So the issue about
21 technology is that we are now needing to
22 really step up our pace, it's really an issue
23 for access. And I'd like to encourage you
24 and CUNY and the independent colleges to work

1 together to kind of influence product
2 development so that it becomes more
3 accessible because of the power of the joint
4 purse that you have to drive that market.

5 I also want to support the \$15 million
6 for students with disabilities. And I'd love
7 to talk to you offline about our teacher
8 education programs.

9 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Okay.
10 With technology, I totally agree with you.
11 One of the major issues during the pandemic
12 is that students went home and did not have
13 the technology to access their remote
14 courses.

15 So many students actually came back to
16 campuses, and we helped them with lending
17 them laptops and of course allowing them on
18 the infrastructure, the internet
19 infrastructure, in order to be able to take
20 their remote classes from the residence halls
21 if necessary. It was a very difficult time
22 for many students.

23 We need to be on top of this. We need
24 to make sure that our students are capable

1 and have the technology in their hands to be
2 able to access what they need in their
3 curriculum. It will help them in the future.

4 We also need to up-skill, up-skill
5 students who are not only in our curriculum
6 at this point, but those students who have
7 graduated from our institutions. Many of us
8 are now getting in the business of working
9 with alumni to bring them back to campus to
10 up-skill them in certain ways for their
11 placement in their careers and for
12 credentialing them to move up in their
13 careers. It's really important to them.

14 So technology is going to be, you
15 know, more and more important as we move
16 forward.

17 I'm sorry, was there another question?

18 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Well, no, I just
19 want to, if I can, just piggyback on that and
20 encourage a view as well of up-skilling or
21 upgrading, for example, the programs that are
22 being used.

23 I think a lot of -- if you talk to
24 anybody, Blackboard is not anybody's favorite

1 program. It's very difficult, it's clunky,
2 it's difficult to use for anybody and it's
3 particularly inaccessible for a lot of people
4 with disabilities.

5 So I think that we can, you know, use
6 that influence that we have in the market to,
7 you know, make a Blackboard 2.0 or 3.0 or
8 some other program that, you know, works much
9 better as a platform for everybody.

10 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I think
11 we're migrating off of Blackboard as we
12 speak.

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Good.

14 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: There is
15 a faculty group, a faculty and administrative
16 group that is compromised of people from
17 across the system that keep an eye on what
18 learning systems we use, learning platforms
19 we use. And I believe that we're migrating
20 off of Blackboard at the end of this year,
21 but I'm not positive of the date.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

23 We go back to the Senate.

24 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Just

1 double-checking no other Senator has snuck in
2 for a first-time ask.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: I see Senator
4 Cooney.

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Oh, Senator
6 Cooney, are you here with your hand up? Yes,
7 you are.

8 SENATOR COONEY: I am, Chair, thank
9 you.

10 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay. Thank you,
11 Assemblywoman, for helping me.

12 Senator Jeremy Cooney.

13 SENATOR COONEY: Thank you, Chairs.

14 And thank you, Chancellor, for your
15 testimony today.

16 I'll build off of the conversation
17 that my colleague mentioned with technology.
18 But sometimes technology can become harmful.
19 And we know that a number of schools and
20 institutions are facing the threat of
21 cyberattacks and could find themselves
22 endangering not only their institutions,
23 their students and their faculty, but the
24 long-term viability of their institution

1 because of some of these terrible ransomware
2 attacks that we read about in the paper.

3 And so my question to you is, what
4 resources does SUNY have available to protect
5 institutions and campuses from these types of
6 attacks? And if resources are unavailable,
7 what type of investment does the State of
8 New York need to make to prevent these
9 cyberattacks from occurring?

10 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, I
11 won't know exactly what resources are
12 available. But I do know it's a
13 collaborative effort across all of SUNY that
14 when one institution has a problem, everyone
15 is on it.

16 I also know that we have to keep
17 making the investments. That once you make
18 an investment and upgrade, it becomes old
19 pretty fast. It's an anachronism
20 immediately, and we have to move on to the
21 next to protect the system.

22 It's worthwhile to protect the system.
23 I think last year all our eyes were opened
24 clear across the system for all of the

1 attacks that were tried. Many of them failed
2 because we were prepared across the system.

3 It's a -- I think that SUNY does a
4 great job in making sure everyone knows
5 what's happening across the system and how to
6 provide for security. We're also testing it
7 out all the time.

8 So I can't say we're immune, that we
9 would always be immune. But at this point I
10 think we've been able to weather most of
11 these storms.

12 SENATOR COONEY: Well, I appreciate
13 that, Chancellor. And of course I'm not
14 surprised that SUNY is prepared. But I also
15 would just close by saying that I am
16 concerned not just for our public
17 universities, but also for our private
18 universities. That I think as these types of
19 technology evolve, there could be risks of
20 losing private information for our students
21 and our faculty members.

22 And it's something that I would ask
23 that we continue to actively monitor so that
24 we can uphold the integrity of our public

1 higher educational system.

2 So thank you for your time today.

3 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Thank
4 you.

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Assembly?

6 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So before we go
7 to the next questioner, I just want to
8 acknowledge a number of Assemblymembers who
9 joined us over the -- while the chancellor
10 was speaking: Assemblywoman Hyndman,
11 Assemblyman Dilan, Assemblyman Cahill,
12 Assemblywoman Joyner. I think that may be
13 it.

14 And now we go to Assemblywoman Forrest
15 for three minutes.

16 ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORREST: Thank you,
17 Chair.

18 And thank you, Chancellor, for being
19 here.

20 I wanted to first of all echo the
21 importance of providing funding to SUNY
22 Downstate, which functioned as a safety net
23 hospital during the pandemic. It's
24 absolutely critical to support our safety net

1 hospitals. I'm very excited about that.

2 I do have a question. As a product of
3 educational opportunity programs, I do
4 wholeheartedly believe in the service that
5 they're providing. Do you believe that
6 expanding the opportunity programs will be
7 enough to serve the students who are
8 currently receiving aid, in addition to
9 adding new students?

10 If not -- or what do you think? Would
11 you support expanding that funding beyond
12 10 percent?

13 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, I'm
14 grateful for the 10 percent. I will always
15 support expanding the funding beyond
16 10 percent.

17 I want to tell you a story about an
18 individual who I've worked with who
19 retired -- he actually did retire about three
20 years ago. I worked with him, he was a SUNY
21 Oswego student in 1970. He came in as one of
22 the first classes of EOP in SUNY Oswego. And
23 he's a writer. He stayed on for many and
24 various administrative jobs. Eventually I

1 asked him to be my executive assistant, and
2 he stayed with me in the president's office
3 for 20 years. His name is Howard Gordon.
4 He's a published writer. He was an amazing
5 partner for me in the president's office.

6 And one day I asked him about the EOP
7 program. And I said, you know, when it was
8 so new, what was important to you? Why
9 did -- you know, he would tell me about some
10 of the discriminatory actions of
11 student-to-student on campus and things that
12 faculty members said that might be considered
13 microaggressions today.

14 I said, "How did you get through?" He
15 said, "You know what? The EOP stipend that I
16 got made me know that New York State was
17 pulling for me. I knew that it was
18 important."

19 So EOP for me is real. EOP for me
20 makes a difference. And I will always fight
21 for more.

22 We're going to do what we can. We're
23 going to add maybe more premed or more
24 preprofessional programs in EOP. And we're

1 going to hopefully increase the stipends for
2 existing students and perhaps add students to
3 the EOP mix.

4 Am I missing anything, Cheryl?

5 STUDENT ADVOCATE HAMILTON: No, we're
6 certainly grateful for the 10 percent
7 addition that's in the Executive Budget. We
8 feel that any additional support can make it
9 possible to increase our students' success
10 rates.

11 ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORREST: I'm sorry, I
12 couldn't really hear. But I do echo your
13 sentiments. And thank you for your support
14 for more beyond 10 percent. Thank you.

15 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So Senator
16 Krueger, do you --

17 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: We have one more.
18 We have three minutes for Toby Stavisky, a
19 second round for her. And then I believe
20 we're done.

21 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

22 Real quick, because it's sort of like
23 a football game and I don't want to get a
24 delay-of-game penalty.

1 Can you compare -- I asked a question
2 earlier about the full-time-student
3 enrollment decline. Can you provide us a
4 campus by campus breakdown so that we can
5 take a look at further information on that
6 score?

7 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Yes.

8 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yeah.

9 Secondly, let me just really quick
10 mention a source of student potential
11 enrollment, and that's the international
12 students.

13 As the COVID rate goes down, I think
14 there should be real outreach to the
15 international students.

16 My two questions really concern
17 improving on-time graduation and retention.
18 And second -- well, let's see if we can do
19 this one in a minute.

20 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Improving
21 on-time graduation and retention?

22 SENATOR STAVISKY: In other words, how
23 is -- what are the trends in on-time
24 graduation and the retention of students, not

1 having them drop out or go someplace else?

2 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, you
3 know how we measure the six-year graduation
4 rate, the four-year graduation rate?

5 SENATOR STAVISKY: Right.

6 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: SUNY is
7 ahead of the state rate, and SUNY is ahead of
8 the national rate on both counts. So we're
9 doing pretty well there. But we are
10 making -- we are making movement constantly.

11 The retention rate is very important.
12 It's important to make progress toward
13 degree. We have to look at the COVID
14 numbers, and that has impacted retention. So
15 we're -- you know, I don't know if I could
16 give you the numbers this year on what the
17 retention is yet. But it certainly has
18 suffered since COVID.

19 SENATOR STAVISKY: If you could get
20 back to us with that.

21 And the other part of my question is
22 it bothers me that SUNY and CUNY are spending
23 money on remediation. How much are you
24 spending on remediation and doing what the

1 high schools should have done in the -- in my
2 opinion, in the first place?

3 You can get back to me because there's
4 really -- I'm running out of time.

5 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I don't
6 know exactly the dollar amount, but I do know
7 that we are trying to move away from
8 remediation totally. And the community
9 colleges are making great strides in math
10 pathways and corequisite English, so that
11 students will not be placed in remediation
12 courses.

13 We have not moved away from them
14 totally at this point, and I don't know
15 exactly the amount of money that we're
16 spending on them, but we can certainly get
17 back to you on that.

18 SENATOR STAVISKY: Good. Thank you.

19 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Assembly, I think
20 it's yours, because the Senate's done for
21 now.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Okay. So
23 Assemblywoman Seawright for three minutes.

24 (Pause.)

1 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: I'm having
2 trouble unmuting here.

3 So thank you, Chairs Weinstein and
4 Krueger.

5 Chancellor Stanley, first as a parent
6 of two SUNY graduates who are currently
7 graduate students at your campus, I want to
8 thank you for bringing your stellar academic
9 and administrative record to the SUNY system
10 at this critical time for the hundreds of
11 thousands of families served by this higher
12 education institution.

13 Here's my question. President Biden
14 has tried to persuade Congress to move in the
15 direction of providing free tuition at
16 community colleges, but without success thus
17 far. With all of the community colleges --
18 do you think the Governor's Executive Budget
19 goes far enough in addressing greater access
20 to our community colleges, which are on the
21 frontlines of higher education democracy here
22 in New York?

23 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: So I
24 didn't catch all of that, but you're talking

1 | about free community college?

2 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: So President
3 Biden has tried to get Congress to support
4 greater access for community colleges and
5 free tuition.

6 Do you think the Governor's Executive
7 Budget goes far enough in advocating for
8 greater access to our community colleges?

9 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, I
10 think we can always go beyond where we are
11 for access. You know, I think we certainly
12 could look at free tuition. But that has
13 not -- if you look at all of the factors on
14 free tuition, it does not necessarily impact
15 enrollment to the extent that we might think
16 it does.

17 We support part-time Pell. We
18 support -- many of the graduates in community
19 colleges graduate debt free. So at this
20 point we're looking at a pretty good model in
21 the community colleges. And the part-time
22 Pell we think -- and the part-time TAP --
23 will help a great deal.

24 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: So President

1 Biden has tried to encourage Congress to
2 provide free tuition to our --

3 (Zoom connection lost.)

4 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: You're
5 breaking up quite a bit, so it's hard to
6 hear.

7 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Let me turn
8 off my video and you can hear me better.

9 Can you hear me now?

10 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes. You have
11 30 seconds, Rebecca.

12 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: I just want
13 to echo my colleague Harvey Epstein in
14 support of --

15 (Zoom audio dropped.)

16 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So we've lost
17 Rebecca, but she agrees with Harvey.

18 So we will go to the next --
19 Assemblymember Buttenschon.

20 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BUTTENSCHON: Good
21 morning. Or good afternoon, excuse me. Good
22 afternoon, Chairs and Chancellor. Thank you
23 all for your leadership.

24 I come from a family of SUNY graduates

1 and understand the importance of all that you
2 do. Many of my colleagues have brought many
3 topics and issues that I support regarding
4 maintaining our community college floor,
5 childcare, EOP, students with special needs
6 concerns and the challenges that they have
7 brought forward.

8 You spoke of SUNY's mission and
9 highlighted the rubric of importance of
10 utilizing data and expanding partnerships. I
11 have the honor to represent Mohawk Valley
12 Community College, Herkimer College, and
13 SUNY Poly.

14 Over the last two years SUNY Poly has
15 increased its student population, has vibrant
16 partnerships at the federal -- as well as
17 industry and business. On the federal level,
18 the Air Force Research Lab; industry with
19 Wolfspeed, that has dedicated 1.5 million for
20 hiring and retaining faculty; and endless
21 business partnerships.

22 One of my colleagues had brought up
23 the issue regarding possibly making some
24 changes in the SUNY system that would reflect

1 negatively with SUNY Poly. I would ask if
2 you could advise me clearly if data as well
3 as many of the -- that is incorporated within
4 the SUNY mission is considered before any
5 changes are made at this time.

6 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY:

7 Absolutely it will be. And of course it will
8 be appropriate data that -- certainly
9 enrollments, as you talk about; partnerships,
10 public-private partnerships; research
11 opportunities -- all of these things will be
12 looked at when we're talking about what
13 happens and the end result of this proposal.

14 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BUTTENSCHON: Again, I

15 appreciate that answer. I know that it is so
16 important that we look at strategic planning
17 with changes that are made within the SUNY
18 system.

19 I've had the honor prior to serve

20 20 years within the SUNY system, starting as
21 a student intern and finishing my career as a
22 dean. So I do understand the importance of
23 strategically looking at changes that need to
24 be made.

1 And again, I would just request that
2 any discussion looks at SUNY Poly as a model
3 of everything that you've talked about today
4 in regards to the ability to be a leader and
5 just continue that leadership within the SUNY
6 system as we approach the importance of
7 affording our students so many opportunities
8 in so many parts of the great State of
9 New York.

10 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: You have
11 my assurance.

12 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BUTTENSCHON: Thank you,
13 Chancellor.

14 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

15 We go to Assemblywoman Griffin.

16 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: Okay. Thank
17 you, Chair Weinstein and Chair Krueger.

18 And it's nice to meet you, Chancellor
19 Stanley. I appreciate all the work you've
20 done so far.

21 I am also a SUNY graduate, as well as
22 my husband. So I really admire all that SUNY
23 does and how SUNY has grown. Every decade
24 SUNY has, you know, been that much more of an

1 education institution.

2 And I completely agree with a lot of
3 the things mentioned by my colleagues, with
4 expanding childcare, mental health services,
5 you know, making strides in services for
6 students with disabilities. And I have
7 Nassau Community College where I represent,
8 Nassau County in Long Island, and
9 Nassau Community College is a great school,
10 great place for students to go for two years,
11 maybe go on from there to stay local, save
12 money. So I am all behind anything we can do
13 to make that more affordable and increase the
14 floor funding for that college -- those
15 colleges, community colleges.

16 I just -- I don't know if this was
17 asked, and forgive me if I missed it, but I
18 wanted to ask about the Excelsior
19 scholarships. I've been in office -- this is
20 my fourth year, and I have yet to meet one
21 constituent that is a recipient of the
22 Excelsior Scholarship. So I'd just love that
23 information, love to find out how many
24 students does the Excelsior really help. And

1 is it something we should look for increasing
2 access, increasing the salary that a family
3 has to make to get that scholarship.

4 And I just wondered if you could maybe
5 impart some of your opinion on the Excelsior,
6 its success, you know. And also if you can
7 provide a current -- not now, you know, but
8 provide a current list of Excelsior
9 recipients, perhaps by district, so we would
10 know how many students in our district take
11 advantage of Excelsior.

12 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: I'm not
13 sure that that list would be available due to
14 privacy issues, so we probably could not
15 provide you that list.

16 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: I don't
17 mean -- I'm sorry --

18 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: But we
19 could provide you gross numbers -- we could
20 provide you probably gross numbers.

21 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: I meant to say
22 the numbers.

23 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Okay.
24 Yes, we could certainly provide you gross

1 numbers.

2 Excelsior I think has about 20,000
3 students right now that are being helped by
4 that scholarship program. And actually I was
5 looking at data about Excelsior, and it looks
6 as if the retention rates are higher for
7 students who are on -- of course it's built
8 into, it's kind of baked into the Excelsior
9 plan that you have to have 30 hours every
10 year, you have to be making progress on your
11 degree. So the retention issues -- and you
12 can't stop out or you lose any ability to go
13 forward with Excelsior, and it may make the
14 previous payments a loan.

15 So it's a good way of kind of
16 attaching students to their degree progress
17 and making them go forward. So the retention
18 rates are higher and the graduation rates are
19 higher.

20 So I think those things are very
21 positive items for students. So I -- this
22 year Governor Hochul has increased the amount
23 of the Excelsior scholarship to match better
24 the SUNY charge for tuition, and she's

1 proposed that. I think that would be a very
2 good thing.

3 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: Okay. Thank
4 you so much. Thank you.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.
6 We go to Assemblyman Cahill, three
7 minutes.

8 ASSEMBLYMAN CAHILL: Thank you very
9 much.

10 And welcome, Chancellor. It's good to
11 see you. It's good to have a person with a
12 background at our comprehensive colleges at
13 the helm, at a time when our comprehensive
14 colleges are facing such serious challenges.

15 I'd like to ask you just to give your
16 view on the Governor's proposal for flagship
17 universities and "national university" status
18 for certain of our schools, and in particular
19 to discuss how that might work interacting
20 with the comprehensive colleges.

21 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Well, we
22 don't know much about what the flagship
23 designation means. I mean, we all have our
24 ideas about what "flagship" means by looking

1 at other states at this point.

2 We believe that all of our
3 doctoral-granting institutions, especially
4 our four doctoral centers, are magnificent
5 schools and they all do a wonderful job.
6 They all have great research programs, they
7 are all certainly awarding doctoral programs
8 {sic}, they have very good statistics on the
9 type of students they bring in and how they
10 graduate those students.

11 So as far the flagship designation is
12 concerned, we're looking at it. What does it
13 mean? The Governor's budget has not actually
14 been reflective of what a flagship means.
15 There's nothing attached in the budget
16 numbers that shows us any differentiation of
17 a flagship designation. So as we go forward,
18 we will have to think about that carefully.

19 What does it mean for the
20 comprehensives? Well, I think it does mean a
21 distinction, and it has -- but I can't say
22 that I think it's a distinction that hasn't
23 already been made. There has always been a
24 distinction between the doctoral-granting

1 institutions and the comprehensives as far as
2 whether or not students want a particular
3 type of institution to study at. And some
4 students are on the fence, they don't really
5 know which one they want to study at. But
6 there are differences in those institutions,
7 and I'm not sure flagship makes a difference
8 in that respect.

9 ASSEMBLYMAN CAHILL: Thank you. I'm
10 going to run out of time, but I want to cover
11 a few other things very quickly. One of the
12 things I would ask that there be a greater
13 focus on -- and I saw and I was very happy to
14 see the Governor include a significant amount
15 of funding for new faculty lines across SUNY
16 and CUNY. But 340 lines divided amongst all
17 of our campuses doesn't really add up to
18 enough to overcome the years of neglect that
19 SUNY has suffered under when it comes to
20 restoring full-time faculty.

21 I would urge you and also my
22 colleagues to make it our business to do all
23 we can to restore funding for more full-time
24 lines, particularly at our comprehensive

1 colleges. You know, our president of our
2 local college said, you know, we have an
3 obligation to be a steward of place, but you
4 are primarily an institution of education.

5 I'm going to run out of time, but I
6 want to also draw your attention to some of
7 the issues surrounding our community colleges
8 in the state and the fact that a significant
9 number of people who participate in them do
10 not matriculate, graduate, get the courses
11 that they need and are unsuccessful at the
12 end of it, so -- but I have run out of time
13 and I will look forward to an opportunity to
14 see you face-to-face and have that
15 conversation.

16 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Yes.
17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We've been
19 joined by Assemblyman Colton and
20 Assemblywoman Cook.

21 And our final questioner is
22 Assemblywoman Glick for her second round of
23 three minutes.

24 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very

1 much.

2 We've talked a bit about the Excelsior
3 scholarship. I'd just like to just for a
4 moment mention the STEM scholarship. This
5 provides for any student who graduates in the
6 top 10 percent of their high school, anywhere
7 in the state, and is studying in the STEM
8 disciplines, a scholarship, you know, a free
9 tuition at SUNY or CUNY.

10 It comes with a little bit of a hook
11 that says if you do not get a job in your
12 chosen field, it will revert to a loan.
13 Which I think is sort of a, you know, a dirty
14 trick if somebody is looking to go back home
15 in an area that doesn't have as much STEM
16 commerce but they want to go home to where
17 their family is or whatever.

18 What is SUNY doing to assist students
19 so that we retain them in the state and they
20 do not have that scholarship turn into a
21 loan?

22 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: You know,
23 we actually retain a lot of students in the
24 state. We retain over 85 percent of the

1 students that graduate in the state. But of
2 course they may not be in -- they either are
3 in higher education or in careers. They may
4 not be in the career of their choice right
5 away when they graduate.

6 So what is SUNY doing? Well, we
7 certainly all have career offices on our
8 campuses. But career offices are changing a
9 great deal. We're working with alumni. We
10 are working with corporations for internships
11 and apprenticeships. It's making that
12 pipeline, it's making those connections while
13 students are in school in order to place them
14 in the careers that they're looking for and
15 give them the practical experience that gives
16 them a leg up when they get into those
17 careers.

18 So we need to expand that to a greater
19 extent clear across the system. Most of the
20 comprehensive institutions are doing this at
21 a great clip. Certainly the research
22 institutions are doing that. And they're
23 doing that with their research as well. When
24 you have students in the lab, that certainly

1 helps.

2 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Well, thank you.

3 I would just say that Excelsior
4 requires somebody to stay in the state for
5 five years so that it doesn't become a loan.
6 But they could go home and do flower
7 arranging with mama and they are not
8 penalized. So I think that, you know, the
9 STEM scholarship students need a little bit
10 more help.

11 And I just, in the moments -- I would
12 just want to raise one other issue which you
13 won't have time to respond to, but to get it
14 on your radar. Out-of-state colleges, the
15 for-profits are doing a lot to recruit
16 students to online courses. So perhaps at
17 some future point you can inform us of what
18 the plan is to get SUNY into that business
19 and make it as available to students as these
20 other campuses that use a lot of money for
21 advertising, which you don't have. What's
22 the plan for you to compete in that arena?

23 Thank you.

24 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Thank

1 you.

2 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

3 So we are finished with questions. I
4 just want -- for you, and I want to thank you
5 for being here, Chancellor Stanley. And I
6 think there may be a couple of questions
7 that -- where you may be sending us answers,
8 where there wasn't time to do that. So just,
9 you know, a reminder to the members we will
10 share -- the Senator and I will share those
11 answers with you.

12 Again, thank you for being here.

13 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Yes, thank you
14 very much.

15 INTERIM CHANCELLOR STANLEY: Thank
16 you.

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Next we're
18 going to call in Chancellor Rodríguez, the
19 chancellor for the City University of
20 New York, CUNY.

21 And you will have -- there you are,
22 Félix. You will have 10 minutes to make a
23 presentation. We've already distributed your
24 testimony, so feel free to summarize, and

1 then we'll go to some questions from members.

2 Thank you.

3 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you,
4 and good afternoon, Chairs Krueger,
5 Weinstein, Stavisky and Glick, and the
6 members of the Senate Finance, Assembly Ways
7 and Means, and the Senate and Assembly Higher
8 Education committees, staff and guests.

9 I'm delighted to be here with you this
10 afternoon. I'm joined by our chief operating
11 officer, Héctor Batista, and our chief
12 financial officer, Matt Sapienza.

13 Thank you so much for the opportunity
14 to testify this afternoon. I am proud to
15 share the many steps that CUNY has taken to
16 assist in the state and the city's recovery
17 and advance CUNY's mission of social
18 mobility, education and knowledge creation.
19 I also am extremely optimistic about the
20 future and CUNY's priorities, plans and goals
21 for the coming fiscal year and beyond.

22 I am extremely honored and humbled to
23 lead the premier and largest urban public
24 university in the United States, serving

1 about 260,000 degree-seeking students and
2 another 185,000 in adult and continuing
3 education programs, and with nearly 40,000
4 faculty and staff at our 25 campuses.

5 On behalf of the entire CUNY
6 community, I want to thank Governor Hochul,
7 the State Senate and the State Assembly for
8 your steadfast and sustained support, which
9 has enabled CUNY to deliver strong results
10 for our students and the citizens of New
11 York. Governor Hochul has been a long-time
12 friend to CUNY and her commitment to higher
13 ed is evident in her Executive Budget
14 proposal.

15 In the past year, even though it was
16 difficult, there were many triumphs for CUNY.
17 We completed the 2020-'21 academic year and
18 awarded 59,295 degrees -- the largest number
19 of degrees in the 175-year history of CUNY.
20 And that number represents a 5 percent
21 increase over the previous year.

22 The ability of the CUNY community to
23 reach this milestone in the face of
24 unprecedented challenges exemplifies the

1 perseverance of the students, the
2 determination of the faculty and staff, and
3 the importance of our mission. Among those
4 who received a diploma this year were the
5 first graduates of the Macaulay Honors Bridge
6 Scholars program, a new program that opened
7 the Macaulay experience to community college
8 transfer students.

9 The federal Higher Education emergency
10 Relief Funds were used to advance a number of
11 initiatives that directly assisted our
12 students -- among them, the expansion of
13 mental health services to assist increasing
14 numbers of students at CUNY struggling with
15 the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. We
16 used \$5 million from federal stimulus funding
17 in each of the last two fiscal years,
18 allowing colleges to reach more students with
19 face-to-face online counseling and other
20 remote and in-person wellness services.

21 Thanks to federal relief funds, CUNY
22 made history by launching the CUNY Comeback
23 Program, erasing more than \$100 million in
24 unpaid tuition and fees for more than 57,000

1 students through what we believe is the
2 country's largest debt-forgiveness initiative
3 of its kind.

4 Additionally, the CUNY Comeback
5 Program granted relief in the form of
6 enhanced emergency grants for students who
7 did not accrue unpaid tuition and fee
8 balances during the period but experienced
9 financial hardship stemming from the
10 pandemic.

11 We also stopped the practice of
12 withholding student transcripts due to
13 failure to pay past or present tuition in
14 August of 2021, a policy that was made
15 permanent by our board at its past
16 January 31st meeting. And we congratulate
17 the Governor for including this in her budget
18 request.

19 CUNY oversaw the timely distribution
20 of \$455 million in emergency grants from
21 three federal stimulus bills. In the fall of
22 2021, all degree-seeking students received
23 funds from the ARPA allocation.

24 And even with the challenges the

1 pandemic has created, prestigious national
2 organizations continue to signal the
3 phenomenal return on investment New Yorkers
4 get from CUNY. Let me give you three quick
5 examples. Ten of CUNY's four-year colleges
6 have been named among the top-performing
7 public schools in the Northern U.S. in 2021
8 by U.S. News & World Report rankings. Ten of
9 our senior colleges also were among the top
10 50 colleges in the nation, and two of our
11 colleges were among the country's top 10,
12 according to Third Way, a public policy think
13 tank, using economist Raj Chetty's work to
14 create an economic mobility index.

15 And not to be left behind, six of our
16 community colleges were invited to compete
17 for the 2023 Aspen Prize for Community
18 College Excellence, considered by many as the
19 highest recognition for community college
20 achievement in the nation. And those six
21 were the only ones in the entire State of
22 New York to be invited to participate.

23 We are also providing direct
24 assistance to the wider community in fighting

1 COVID-19. Eight CUNY colleges across all
2 five boroughs hosted vaccination sites and
3 pop-ups, collaborating with the city, state
4 and federal governments to vaccinate over
5 520,000 New Yorkers on the grounds of our
6 campuses. Also, more than 2,500 CUNY nursing
7 and medical students stepped forward to help
8 run vaccination sites all across New York
9 City.

10 In the fall of 2021, we increased also
11 our in-person class offerings. And this
12 spring semester, a majority of our class
13 offerings are in-person, while we're also
14 offering more online and hybrid courses than
15 we ever did before the pandemic began.

16 CUNY is also a research powerhouse
17 where externally sponsored research and
18 programs totaling over \$500 million
19 contribute knowledge and develop solutions
20 for critical regional and national challenges
21 including the climate crisis, energy, public
22 health, and other public impact areas. Just
23 this fall, CUNY secured one of only seven
24 national awards for an innovation hub through

1 a \$15 million grant from the National Science
2 Foundation.

3 Now let me comment briefly on Governor
4 Hochul's Executive Budget, which would
5 increase CUNY's operating budget by over
6 \$171 million. The Governor's proposal to add
7 \$53 million to hire approximately 540 new
8 full-time faculty would fulfill a request
9 from CUNY built around student-centered
10 priorities. We know that full-time
11 instructors have a particularly high impact
12 in courses that have low passing rates,
13 provide more consistent opportunities for
14 faculty mentoring and advising, and have more
15 time to focus on the development of new
16 courses and the revision of existing ones.

17 Additionally, Governor Hochul's
18 Executive Budget contains a number of welcome
19 improvements to the TAP program. The
20 Executive Budget would increase state support
21 to CUNY four-year colleges by \$59.6 million
22 to cover the so-called TAP gap; include TAP
23 awards for part-time students enrolled in
24 degree programs and in non-degree

1 state-approved workforce credentialing
2 programs; and also propose the repeal of
3 legislation banning incarcerated individuals
4 from receiving state financial aid.

5 We have advocated for similar changes
6 in the past and thank the Governor for her
7 leadership in making these changes.

8 We're also grateful for almost
9 \$48 million in increased funding for CUNY's
10 fringe benefits budget. Unlike state
11 agencies, CUNY's fringe benefits are a
12 line-item appropriation in our state budget.
13 Annual funding increases are vital, as our
14 fringe benefits costs account for almost a
15 quarter of the university's total operating
16 budget.

17 For the community colleges, the
18 Executive Budget includes a 100 percent
19 funding floor, equated to current-year
20 funding levels. This will assist our
21 community colleges with budget stability and
22 is something that CUNY advocated for in our
23 budget request for 2023.

24 With respect to the capital budget,

1 the Executive proposal recommends
2 \$792.8 million in new funding, \$284.2 million
3 for critical maintenance, and \$425 million
4 for expansion and improvements at the senior
5 colleges.

6 The Governor's budget also adds
7 \$44.8 million in matching funding for
8 community college projects that have already
9 received funding from the City of New York.
10 These funds are needed to maintain our 300
11 buildings, totaling 29 million square feet
12 across 25 campuses, and to expand where
13 needed. And those dollars, as you know, for
14 every million dollars in construction
15 spending, we create 1,000 direct and indirect
16 jobs for the local economy, and it allows us
17 to continue to support our MWBE vendors.

18 I am extremely optimistic about the
19 future of this great university, especially
20 in light of the challenges we have overcome
21 these past two years. I thank you for your
22 support.

23 And this concludes the abridged
24 version of my testimony, but please note that

1 I have submitted a more comprehensive version
2 for the record. I'm delighted to be here to
3 answer any questions that you have -- and
4 ended up with time to spare.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: You must have
6 sat with a timer to get it down to just the
7 10 minutes.

8 We go to our chair of Higher Ed,
9 Assemblywoman Glick.

10 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thanks. We were
11 having a little bit of trouble with the
12 rodent mouse.

13 Okay, thank you so much, Chancellor.
14 It's always good to see you. And as a CUNY
15 grad, I'm very proud of all of the work that
16 the university does.

17 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you.

18 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: It got me and my
19 sisters to where -- and their husbands -- to
20 where we are today, and we're very grateful.

21 The operating aid is very welcome
22 news, but, you know, it's over a long period
23 of time of disinvestment. So what is the
24 actual -- it's a nice bump-up, but you have a

1 large cohort of students, hundreds of
2 thousands. So what's the actual deficit on
3 the number of full-time faculty that you
4 would really need in order to expand your
5 proper ratio for full-time faculty to
6 students and adjunct instructors?

7 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Well,
8 thank you for that question.

9 The proposal of the 540 full-time
10 lecturer lines that was included in the
11 budget would actually significantly reduce
12 our reliance on part-time faculty, going back
13 to the point that you make.

14 Our budget request had included 1,000
15 new faculty lines, including the 540, so we
16 could also fill in existing vacancies in
17 other areas too. So that was part of our
18 budget request for 2023.

19 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Great.

20 Now, again, on your capital needs, a
21 lot of your buildings are, you know -- it's
22 New York City, they're a little bit older
23 than some of the campuses that might be in
24 other parts of the state.

1 At the current rate that is included
2 in this budget, how long will it be for you
3 to upgrade the facilities that you have, and
4 how many proposed upgrades and new buildings
5 will it take -- how many years would it take
6 for you to get to where you want to be, at
7 this current support level? Which is better
8 than we've had in the past, admittedly. But
9 there are a number of -- I get the requests
10 from various campuses, they need this, they
11 need that.

12 Where does this get you, and how many
13 allocations like this will it take for you to
14 build out the campuses as you'd like?

15 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So thank
16 you for that.

17 And I forgot to begin by also bringing
18 greetings to you, an alum, from the 727 CUNY
19 students who are part of your district. I
20 always travel with all of them when I come to
21 talk to all of you here, the Assembly and the
22 Senate.

23 I don't think that we've made the
24 calculation in the way that you have

1 formulated your question. We can certainly
2 do that and provide you that figure.

3 But clearly we have a need for
4 additional critical maintenance support for
5 our campuses. It is a great investment for
6 the City of New York. You know, our campuses
7 are not just used by us, they're used by the
8 DOE, they used them during the pandemic when
9 they needed extra classrooms. They're used
10 for early voting.

11 So any dollars that you invest in CUNY
12 infrastructure is not just great for our
13 educational mission, but the multiplying
14 effects in the neighborhoods where our
15 campuses are really, really significant.

16 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Let me just turn
17 to -- we have, over the last 10 years, done a
18 very good job of incrementally increasing our
19 opportunity programs and providing more
20 resources. And we are grateful to the
21 Governor for, you know, not -- for not only
22 giving an increase, we are so thrilled we
23 don't have to backfill.

24 But I'm wondering if someone on your

1 staff at some point can inform us of how many
2 students apply that you cannot serve, based
3 on what you have allocated in this budget.
4 So we know that those programs get students
5 on track, keep them on track, and graduate
6 them on-time or close to on-time. And we
7 assume that there are students that are
8 turned away, and through only the lack of
9 resources.

10 So if we could get that number, that
11 would be helpful.

12 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Certainly
13 happy to provide that.

14 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: I want to thank
15 you for your debt forgiveness and transcript
16 position -- that has been extremely
17 important -- and for the emergency grants
18 that I know that you worked very hard to
19 raise funds for.

20 I'm wondering about where -- when I
21 went to school we did not have food
22 insecurity issues. We might have had
23 cafeteria, you know, inadequacies, but we did
24 not have the level of food insecurity.

1 What is the current status of campus
2 food pantries, and what kind of assistance is
3 being offered to students? And how much more
4 could we be doing if you got additional
5 resources specifically for that?

6 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So, I
7 mean, it's a huge issue. And one of the
8 things that we're doing now, for example, is
9 a very aggressive campaign to get as many of
10 our students who are eligible for SNAP to be
11 able to qualify. Because those are dollars
12 that we can't be leaving on the table, which
13 is additional support for students.

14 So we have an entire web page and a
15 strategy and are working with some private
16 funders to be able to secure and direct more
17 students there.

18 During the pandemic we learned a
19 number of things. Our food pantries became
20 open to all CUNY students. And I would argue
21 that probably in the future, Assemblywoman
22 Glick, it would be through partnerships with
23 local community groups that we can better
24 attack food insecurity, right? Because if

1 our students are living in whatever community
2 they live, they should be able to access
3 their food there.

4 So I think that down the line a public
5 policy that connects us with other ones who
6 are engaged in food insecurity at the
7 neighborhood level will probably be a smarter
8 way from a public policy perspective. We
9 will always have the food pantries and all
10 those things, but it's much better to meet
11 the students where they live, where they have
12 the need.

13 And that's where I would invest
14 dollars, even if they didn't come to CUNY.
15 But if they were going to the right community
16 groups and agencies, then they were able to
17 support our students where they live.

18 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Well, perhaps we
19 can have, with some of your staff, more of a
20 conversation of what partners are out there
21 and that you're currently working with --

22 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Yup.

23 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: -- and see what
24 we can do about directing resources there.

1 Now, I think we're all very excited
2 about part-time TAP. Where do you think you
3 will see -- do you think that will be most
4 helpful in our community colleges, or do you
5 think that that's going to be across the
6 board, that support? And of course that
7 part-time TAP is targeted to undergraduates.
8 So what are your thoughts about how it will
9 help, where it will help, and any other
10 thoughts you have about what more we could do
11 in that arena?

12 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: It's a
13 long-awaited change, and kudos for the step
14 in the right direction. And I think as we do
15 more -- and you and I have spoken about
16 this -- we'll see where the added need is and
17 we can maybe allocate additional resources.

18 Clearly our largest sector of
19 part-time enrollment is at the community
20 colleges. And I think that that's where we
21 will see, you know, the highest volume
22 assisting.

23 I also think that it's going to be
24 very beneficial to the enrollment issue that

1 that sector has been experiencing, because I
2 think you have a lot of students that have
3 been affected economically, healthwise, in
4 their families, because of the pandemic, and
5 the idea of going full-time can be
6 intimidating. And so by attending part-time
7 with support from TAP, we get them engaged,
8 we get them back into higher ed. So I think
9 that this is, you know, one of the best news
10 in the entire budget, this support for
11 part-time TAP.

12 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: One of the
13 things the Governor is very keyed in on is
14 expanding our healthcare professions in terms
15 of -- you know, from my point of view,
16 nursing is one of the most important.
17 Because if you're in the hospital, that's
18 90 percent of who you're going to see, are
19 going to be nurses.

20 You have a lot of nursing programs.
21 Perhaps somebody can tell us how many people
22 you have to turn away and whether or not they
23 are working with their students to explain to
24 them that there are scholarships available,

1 through the state, for continuing their
2 education and focusing them on also thinking
3 about becoming nurse educators. And
4 expanding those programs to perhaps find
5 nurses who have, maybe through this pandemic,
6 thought maybe they'd rather be teaching
7 rather than going back to hospitals.

8 So perhaps we can work together on --
9 and maybe your folks could get back to us on
10 what you're doing with nursing programs and
11 getting students to think about continuing
12 their education in that arena.

13 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: We can
14 send you that. And thank you for raising
15 that point, because to expand our capacity,
16 one of the main issues is the shortage of
17 teaching professionals in nursing. So very
18 much in line with your colleagues, and we're
19 happy to provide the information that you
20 requested.

21 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you.

22 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you.

23 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to the
24 Senate.

1 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

2 And we go to our Higher Ed chair, Toby
3 Stavisky.

4 SENATOR STAVISKY: I guess I have a
5 rodent problem too, with the mouse.

6 Chancellor, thank you. And I
7 appreciate our conversations as recently as I
8 guess last week.

9 Real quick, you spoke about full-time
10 faculty. What is the ratio of full-time
11 faculty at CUNY now?

12 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: I don't
13 know that number offhand.

14 SENATOR STAVISKY: Will you have
15 someone get back to us?

16 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Yeah,
17 absolutely. Absolutely, yes.

18 SENATOR STAVISKY: Okay.

19 The second question. We passed the
20 TAP expanding eligibility to DREAM students.
21 How has that impacted CUNY? Do you know how
22 many students, Dreamers, have enrolled at
23 CUNY?

24 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So we can

1 get you that information.

2 We have about 5,500 undocumented
3 students, is our calculation, in the system.
4 And it's been a game-changer for them in
5 terms of some steady support. So kudos to
6 the Senate and the Assembly for that support.
7 And if we can do more, I'm sure that those
8 students would continue to benefit from that.

9 SENATOR STAVISKY: I think that's a
10 terrific idea, frankly.

11 A couple of other questions -- because
12 many of them have been addressed. I asked
13 the chancellor of SUNY, and I want to ask you
14 the same question. I am concerned about --

15 (Zoom interruption.)

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: Excuse me?

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Go ahead, Toby.
18 I'm sorry, I forgot my microphone was on.

19 SENATOR STAVISKY: I am concerned
20 about the students who I think somewhere may
21 have left high school, never made it to CUNY,
22 and I think the community colleges are the
23 perfect place for -- or the four-year
24 colleges, either way.

1 But what have you been doing to reach
2 out to work with the New York City Department
3 of Education to find these students and to
4 have them enrolling in the community colleges
5 or the four-year colleges? To me, that will
6 help any decline in enrollment very, very
7 dramatically.

8 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So we've
9 done a great number of things.

10 And let me also bring you greetings on
11 behalf of the 9,764 students of CUNY that are
12 in your district, Senator.

13 SENATOR STAVISKY: Are you talking
14 about current students?

15 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Yup.

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: Wow. Okay.

17 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So we
18 created a number of programs with the DOE.

19 We got support from the Petrie and the
20 Bloomberg Foundation, for example, to create
21 a program to have students at CUNY mentor,
22 graduating kids, so that you wouldn't have
23 the summer melt, it will stay with them, and
24 make sure that they enroll and they came to

1 class. And it provided internship money, a
2 stipend for our students, so a win/win in all
3 scenarios.

4 We also had the first community
5 college exclusive sort of marketing campaign
6 from the central office. We were
7 particularly looking at African-American and
8 Latino students, because we saw that there
9 was a decline in those numbers, particularly
10 the community college enrollment session.

11 So we did a number of things to be
12 able to work with the DOE and others to bring
13 those students into CUNY, and we will
14 continue to do more.

15 SENATOR STAVISKY: The Governor's
16 Executive Budget has various provisions for
17 the so-called flagship four-year colleges of
18 SUNY. How do you feel about applying this
19 concept to CUNY?

20 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: We don't
21 use the flagship term at CUNY. I think -- I
22 welcome the focus from the Governor in
23 expanding research funding throughout the
24 state, and we would like for CUNY to benefit

1 from that investment.

2 Research creates knowledge, but also
3 research funding attracts additional research
4 dollars. So we want those dollars in
5 New York City. We're talking about bringing
6 the city back. It would be a great way to
7 have added support for research, because
8 that's going to multiply knowledge and it's
9 going to multiply grants into CUNY.

10 And also think about the equity issue.
11 A lot of our researchers of color in the
12 state, and the students, the graduate
13 students, are in CUNY. So we would like to
14 be able to see an initial investment there
15 too, and are delighted that the Governor is
16 focusing on research overall for higher ed.

17 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you. Because
18 I too agree that CUNY has tremendous research
19 potential, which I'd love to see in reality.

20 You and I discussed the question of
21 mental health support for your students.
22 Would you comment on that issue and what
23 you've done and what's there in the budget?

24 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you.

1 So we have used stimulus funding, the
2 funding that's going to the colleges,
3 \$5 million in each cycle, to bring in
4 additional in-person and virtual support and
5 mental health for the students.

6 We would love to be able to get
7 additional support, we think about maybe
8 \$8 million in the budget would be appropriate
9 for this, to continue those investments that
10 we made. And also to cover some of the
11 schools that we were not able to provide any
12 funding because they were not -- the students
13 did not qualify for the stimulus funding.

14 So -- and I want to thank also,
15 because I know that you were key in getting
16 that additional million last year in the
17 budget, and would we like to have those
18 things as baseline.

19 SENATOR STAVISKY: And you and I
20 discussed what happened in reality when we
21 did not increase tuition last year and this
22 year, including the shortfall that may have
23 resulted.

24 How would you address that issue of --

1 because I totally believe we must not rely on
2 the students to support higher education.
3 This is a state requirement. And certainly
4 we're trying to reverse the trend. But I
5 don't want to see CUNY or SUNY affected by
6 it.

7 How has this no-tuition-increase
8 policy affected CUNY?

9 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: I mean, it
10 is something that has been beneficial to our
11 students. We have also with the community
12 colleges, as you know, not raised tuition for
13 now over five years. So we did it before it
14 was something that was included in the
15 budget.

16 But we have mandatory costs that we
17 have to meet. Right? And for example, in
18 the -- and we're so appreciative for the
19 filling of the TAP gap on this budget. But
20 that is based on the tuition about three
21 years ago.

22 So those last two years and then this
23 incoming year, going, those three years of no
24 increases have left a gap of about

1 \$133 million in our campuses, which we need
2 to cover the mandatory costs, the commitments
3 we made -- for example, the large significant
4 bump for adjuncts goes into this summer's --
5 into this year's budget. We'll be able to --
6 sort of be able to fulfill all that with that
7 additional support of \$133 million.

8 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

9 Obviously, you know, we discussed this
10 and I just wanted to -- everybody to hear the
11 effect, because I am so totally committed to
12 increasing the state support and reversing
13 this terrible trend of requiring the students
14 to pay for what the state should be doing.

15 What have you been doing to improve
16 student graduation rates? In other words,
17 coming closer to the traditional four-year,
18 two-year graduation?

19 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Well,
20 again, I mentioned in my testimony that we
21 broke the record of the number of graduates
22 at CUNY in this year, and you would think
23 that a year with so many challenges, right,
24 that that would not have been the year in

So -- and we were 5 percent over the year before. That was the second highest number in our history.

Obviously additional financial support is important. During the pandemic we also did the switching of -- for a year of courses -- the students had the option of taking credit/no credit courses to navigate their needs. I think that was very helpful, and the students mentioned that flexibility as something that helped them.

So we're taking a comprehensive look.

1 And actually we had a one-day conference two
2 months ago of best practices across the
3 system to continue to deliver on higher
4 graduation rates.

5 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

6 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to our
8 ranker on Ways and Means, Assemblyman Ra, for
9 five minutes.

10 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Thank you, Chair.

11 Chancellor, thanks for being with us
12 again.

13 Just along the same lines of what
14 Chair Stavisky was just talking about with
15 regard to the tuition freeze. I'm just
16 wondering specifically -- you know, we know
17 costs always go up. Obviously with the
18 record inflation we're experiencing, I would
19 imagine there's any number of things that are
20 perhaps going up even more so.

21 So just wondering, you know, again if
22 you can shed any light on that, how that has
23 impacted the costs of the school relative to,
24 you know, what we should be thinking about

1 when making investments in this budget.

2 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Well,
3 thank you. And again, greetings from the
4 189 CUNY students that are part of your
5 district. So thank you for your support.

6 And for us, clearly, being able to
7 keep the mandatory costs -- I mean, it was
8 really important for us, the covering of the
9 fringe benefit costs which as you know is
10 something that we always have to add into the
11 budget. So we appreciate the fact that the
12 Governor included it this year. I mean,
13 fringe benefits is, you know, about
14 25 percent of our costs. So that's a huge
15 investment.

16 And again, if we could get sort of
17 that number that I mentioned, which is about
18 133, which would have been if we had had
19 tuition increases over the last three
20 years -- which we didn't -- and it's probably
21 doing the right thing for the students,
22 right, in terms of what they need. But we
23 have made commitments in terms of our labor
24 contracts, in the case of a number of other

1 things. If we could get that support back,
2 it would be a huge advantage to us.

3 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: I always love that
4 you have those statistics ready for us,
5 because it brings it all home about the
6 impact on our individual districts. So thank
7 you for that.

8 The one other question I had, you
9 know, talking to Chancellor Stanley, you
10 know, about the floor, the funding floor and,
11 you know, the 100 percent of last year's
12 number, which is -- which is good and
13 provides some continuity. But we know that,
14 you know, given what we're coming through
15 here, that perhaps looking back a couple of
16 years, maybe even pre-pandemic, might be more
17 beneficial.

18 Do you know what that number would
19 look like in terms of the difference in the
20 funding at 100 percent if we're basing it on
21 '21-'22, as opposed to if we went back to the
22 last pre-pandemic year of '18-'19?

23 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So I don't
24 have that offhand, but we can certainly make

1 that available for you.

2 And we -- the -- in our budget request
3 we asked for this funding floor, and in
4 addition \$300 dollars in base aid. But I can
5 certainly get those numbers to your office.

6 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Okay, that would be
7 great. Thank you, Chancellor.

8 Thank you, Chairs.

9 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you.

10 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to the
11 Senate.

12 I think somebody may have their mic
13 unmuted.

14 The Senate?

15 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

16 We go to John Liu, our chair of
17 New York City Education, for 10 minutes.

18 SENATOR LIU: Thank you so much, Madam
19 Chairs.

20 Thank you, Chancellor, for joining us.
21 It's always a pleasure to see you. Let's
22 start with the pleasure before we get to the
23 pain.

24 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Can we just have

1 whoever try to mute so that you're not
2 overlapping John Liu? Thank you.

3 SENATOR LIU: Thank you, Madam Chair.

4 I appreciate your testimony,
5 Chancellor, and the responses that you've
6 given to my colleagues before. I guess, you
7 know, we're -- I feel like we're in some kind
8 of twilight zone when we're celebrating a
9 \$124 million increase to CUNY. Right? I
10 mean, it just doesn't seem like a lot to
11 celebrate. It's -- it might taste great, but
12 it's less filling.

13 So I've often posed this question to
14 you, and I'll pose it again to you. Right?
15 What if somehow there was a lot more money
16 for CUNY? And I guess, more specifically --
17 I don't recall you talking about this
18 recently. You know, the PSC and students and
19 a lot of CUNY advocates, myself included, and
20 Senator Gounardes, they put forth this plan
21 called New Deal for CUNY. What do you think
22 about the major components of this New Deal
23 for CUNY? And is it something that we should
24 aim for? Is it something that's in your

1 chancellorship's eyes? Or is it just
2 something that -- are we going down a blind
3 alley here?

4 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Well,
5 thank you always for your questions. And,
6 you know, I also bring you greetings on
7 behalf of the 10,833 CUNY students that are
8 part of your district. So thank you for your
9 support --

10 SENATOR LIU: I think it's down from
11 12,000 last year.

12 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: My note
13 says that is an increase. But I can
14 double-check that for you.

15 SENATOR LIU: Okay.

16 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: But
17 there's still a kind of quite a sizable group
18 there.

19 But -- so again, many of the elements
20 that are present in the CUNY New Deal are
21 things, for example, that we included in our
22 budget proposal, like the additional number
23 of full-time faculty, additional number of
24 personnel for mental health services.

1 One element, for example, which is of
2 particular interest to me -- which is not
3 addressed directly in the CUNY New Deal --
4 but is support for our infrastructure and
5 career services. If we want additional paid
6 internships, if we want additional
7 connections to industry, if we want the
8 pipeline of our courses and curriculum to be
9 better aligned, we need to have the
10 individuals who are out there connected with
11 industry bringing that knowledge back,
12 connecting our students. And frankly, it's
13 one area where in CUNY we have work to do and
14 it's often not mentioned when we think
15 about -- we talk about advising as a general
16 category, and that's an important category,
17 and academic advising is.

18 But the advisement of students to
19 connect with the world of work, where half of
20 our students come from families that do not
21 have parents who have a college education, I
22 think it's particularly, particularly
23 important and would pay great benefits if we
24 have added support in that arena.

1 SENATOR LIU: That seems like a
2 relatively minor budget item, at least from
3 the advocates' point of view. It's a
4 \$28 million cost over five years.

5 So I guess that your -- that's the
6 first thing that you would mention as part of
7 the New Deal for CUNY that they didn't --

8 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: I think I
9 mentioned before that in the budget request
10 we included faculty and additional mental
11 health support. And I was saying something
12 that was not part of the elements of the
13 New Deal. But I mentioned faculty and mental
14 health support and the academic advisors too.

15 So I was just signaling something
16 which I think we don't include often and is
17 moving forward a key element if we want to
18 really succeed in connecting our students to
19 the world of work.

20 SENATOR LIU: Sure, I appreciate you
21 mentioning faculty. It is certainly a huge
22 part of the New Deal for CUNY, getting
23 full-time faculty. You know, it looks like
24 CUNY is at half the national average with 35

1 full-time faculty per 1,000 students, as
2 compared to nationwide, which is more like 65
3 per 1,000 students.

4 So what do you think, do you think
5 students -- current students and potential
6 students care about the faculty/student
7 ratio? Because the interim SUNY chancellor a
8 couple of hours earlier didn't seem to think
9 that students cared.

10 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Well,
11 again, I did not listen to her testimony, but
12 given her track record, I'm sure that that is
13 not what -- I mean, I didn't hear, so I'm not
14 going to comment on that.

15 But, I mean, clearly when any of us --
16 right, you go to a reunion, you bring alumni
17 back, they often remember a faculty member
18 that was inspirational and important in their
19 life. It's one of the things that in all
20 those places always matters.

21 So really -- and that's why we made in
22 our request a big push for additional
23 full-time faculty. They're there for you for
24 advisement, for mentorship. They're there

1 year to year to year, right, so it gives some
2 consistency.

3 You know, because I know that you took
4 your teaching duties very seriously, and you
5 still do, they're also important for
6 reference letters, to be able to support you
7 when you're looking for jobs. Right? All
8 those things that having someone who is
9 consistently there for you matters.

10 So I think it's a key thing for
11 universities. It is a part of any student's
12 success strategy. And it's also part of our
13 investment in research and the creation of
14 knowledge and dissemination of knowledge,
15 which is what -- you know, part of the core
16 reasons for a university. So absolutely.
17 Absolutely.

18 SENATOR LIU: Okay, so you think that
19 the faculty -- having a larger
20 faculty-to-student ratio is something that
21 students would like to see, and that having
22 more full-time faculty, which is what the
23 private colleges like to boast in their
24 records, is also a good thing for students?

1 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ:

2 Absolutely.

3 SENATOR LIU: All right. And then a
4 big part of the New Deal for CUNY has to do
5 with tuition, curtailing the rise of tuition.
6 You talked about how there hasn't been an
7 increase for the last three years, which I
8 think is a great thing.

9 But can we do even more than that?
10 And would it be a priority if the money was
11 somehow there, to not only hold the line on
12 tuitions but actually reverse the line on
13 tuitions -- again, with this interim goal of
14 getting the percentage of CUNY operating
15 costs paid for by tuitions back down to what
16 it was 20 years ago.

17 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So again,
18 there's no doubt that a policy that would
19 make tuition free for the students would be
20 beneficial to the students. Right?

21 The other part of that question is,
22 are you going to have the resources so that
23 the education that you're receiving and the
24 experience that you receive is a quality one?

1 Right? And that is the part that is often
2 not addressed in formulations about free
3 tuition. Right?

4 So I think that most people would say
5 that if you could have the resources
6 available to be able to have the highest
7 quality education possible and not charge
8 tuition, that would be a win/win scenario.

9 We are very proud of the fact that,
10 you know, about 75 percent of our students
11 graduate with no debt and about 66 percent of
12 our students -- between the support from the
13 state, which is very generous with TAP and
14 Pell -- pay no tuition.

15 SENATOR LIU: Great. Thank you so
16 much. I just have one last quick question
17 for you, which is kind of a pet peeve of mine
18 because I taught there for a little bit, and
19 that is the -- at the Murphy School of Labor
20 Studies. And I believe CUNY, under your
21 leadership, has given them a little bit more
22 resource, an additional floor for them to
23 have classes.

24 They have a great idea. They want to

1 be able to use some of their classroom space
2 for some kind of a labor museum during the
3 daytime, when obviously they don't have many
4 students, because the students at Murphy are
5 all full-time workers. So what do you think
6 of that idea?

7 And, you know, they don't want you to
8 have to pay for the whole thing, but they do
9 need some kind of a slight lease expansion.

10 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: We are
11 very proud to have supported their request,
12 and they're getting about 50 percent
13 additional space, not just for their
14 classrooms but also for the library and some
15 of their administrative needs. So we're
16 very, very supportive of that school as it
17 continues to galvanize -- and I think that,
18 again, we have many of our campuses that have
19 exhibits in part of their space, and we are
20 fully supportive of those kinds of
21 partnerships.

22 I want to focus on really
23 strengthening and solidifying our great
24 School of Labor, and -- but any partnership

1 that they want to do, that they're going to
2 have with assisting space, it's music to my
3 ears.

4 SENATOR LIU: Thank you.

5 Madam Chair, see, I ended on time.

6 Like I always do. Thank you.

7 Thank you, Mr. Chancellor.

8 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you,
9 Senator Liu.

10 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
11 Assemblyman Epstein, three minutes.

12 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you,
13 Chair.

14 And thank you, Chancellor, for all
15 your work and being with us today.

16 You know, I wanted to talk to you
17 about the struggles that we've seen with
18 students who, you know, have food insecurity,
19 transportation insecurity, housing
20 insecurity, and how CUNY can be a better
21 provider for them. We've seen a lot of young
22 people who haven't been able to continue
23 their education. And I know this is
24 something that you hear regularly, and I hear

1 it as well, you know, part-time students
2 can't make it, they're dropping out.

3 What -- you know, I know you've done a
4 lot of expanding food pantries across every
5 campus and allowing people to go eat. But
6 I'm wondering what you haven't done yet.
7 What are the -- where are the holes that we
8 need to start filling for all these young
9 people?

10 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Well,
11 thank you for that. As I mentioned in the
12 questions from Assemblywoman Glick, I do
13 think that we need to provide some core
14 elemental support. The food pantries in our
15 campuses. Make sure the students qualify for
16 every possible benefit, right? Those things
17 are steps in the right direction.

18 But I also think that moving forward,
19 and I think the pandemic taught us a lot
20 about supporting people where they are in
21 food insecurity. So I think that
22 partnerships with some of the nonprofits that
23 occupy this space might be the way to go in
24 terms of really -- because those are the

1 neighborhoods where the students live, right?
2 Probably easier for them to shop in that
3 community, be around that community to get
4 their needs met.

5 So I think that that is work that we
6 want to do.

7 On the housing insecurity, we have a
8 couple of --

9 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Chancellor, can
10 I ask you, what do you need to help make that
11 work? What do you need from us to allow
12 those partnerships to flourish?

13 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: You know,
14 I think that we should have -- I mean, and
15 because food insecurity was such a key issue
16 during the pandemic, right? I mean, not that
17 it was not before, but I think it drove it
18 home. I think that we should really sit down
19 together with the folks who are doing
20 innovative work in that space, because I
21 think there's a lot of -- and we saw it.

22 We have, for example, deliveries of
23 food that some of our campuses took in the
24 pandemic because they were not coming to the

1 campus, right? So it means that meeting them
2 where they are is the key thing. And there
3 might be some institutions better suited than
4 we are in making that, and we use it to make
5 the connections.

6 So I just want to be in the space of
7 not just doing the same things that we've
8 been doing, but try to be more innovative to
9 really meet the student where the need is.

10 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: That's great,
11 chancellor. And I'd really look to the
12 Medgar model because I think they have a very
13 comprehensive model of food, social worker
14 support at Medgar Evers.

15 And, you know, I'm happy to sit down
16 with you, you know, past budget, just to
17 really think this through more, because I
18 think this is a critical thing that we
19 haven't grappled with.

20 And I know I only have, you know,
21 30 seconds left, so maybe quickly on housing
22 and quickly on transportation.

23 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So on
24 housing, we have a number of pilots that

1 we're working with several nonprofits in the
2 Bronx that are very promising --

3 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: What do you need
4 from us, Chancellor? I'm sorry, I know what
5 you're doing. I would love to know what you
6 need.

7 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So, I
8 mean, on the housing front I would imagine
9 that since we don't provide housing,
10 partnerships for us to work with the entities
11 that provide housing to make those
12 connections happen and make them lasting.

13 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: And how about
14 transportation needs that students have?

15 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: I mean,
16 I've -- you've heard this from me before.
17 When you are in the DOE, right, you get your
18 books, you get meals and you get
19 transportation. You graduate and three
20 months later you show up in my campus -- in
21 any of my campuses, and none of those things
22 are covered.

23 So any additional support that we can
24 get to support that -- ASAP has shown us the

1 difference that providing transportation
2 costs for the students makes. So any
3 investment there would be well received.

4 Thank you.

5 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you,
6 Chancellor. Thank you, Chair.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

8 To the Senate.

9 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

10 And we're back to Robert Jackson.

11 SENATOR JACKSON: So good afternoon,
12 Chancellor, and to your chief operating
13 officer and chief financial officer.

14 Let me just say this to you. I looked
15 at your stats, and you said you had the
16 highest number of graduates ever in CUNY, and
17 I'm so proud of that. How did you do it?

18 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: With
19 thanks to the very dedicated faculty and
20 staff that we have, and the tenacity of New
21 York City students that wanted to persevere
22 and they really wanted to make their
23 education count during the pandemic. So the
24 students and our faculty and staff and the

1 entire team are the heroes in making that
2 happen. Thank you.

3 SENATOR JACKSON: Well, congratulate
4 them on my behalf.

5 But I have a question. The PSC last
6 contract made substantial gains for adjunct
7 lecturers and professors. Teaching a
8 three-credit course at CUNY will move them to
9 a single of \$5,500. However, they still do
10 not have pay parity with full-time faculty of
11 the same title.

12 Would you support legislation that
13 provides funding for CUNY to increase adjunct
14 faculty pay to achieve parity with full-time
15 lecturers?

16 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So in this
17 budget proposal we have the high bump that we
18 negotiated where adjuncts will go to \$5500,
19 which is a significant increase from where
20 they are right now. So I'm very proud of
21 that increase.

22 And so again, we're delighted to be
23 supportive to do more for our adjuncts.

24 SENATOR JACKSON: Well, clearly when

1 you pay staff and you're paying them a decent
2 wage, they stay. If you don't pay them well,
3 they leave. And that -- we need continuity
4 of services provided, in order to increase
5 the graduation rate that you're doing now.
6 So please keep up the good work.

7 But do you think that expanding TAP
8 for five years and/or restoring eligibility
9 to graduate students, in addition to allowing
10 optional semesters, quarters or terms
11 eligible for awards, will have a similar
12 result in enrollment, student achievement, as
13 you stated for your part-time TAP expansion?

14 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: We have
15 seen the difference that TAP makes in our
16 students' lives. So support for them, like
17 the one that we see in this budget for
18 part-time and for people that were
19 incarcerated, are huge steps into bigger
20 equity and having larger numbers of students
21 take advantage of higher ed.

22 SENATOR JACKSON: So Senator Stavisky
23 mentioned mental health professionals. From
24 my understanding, CUNY has chosen to hire

1 part-time temporary mental health counselors
2 to try to meet the needs of students. With
3 increased funding, are you committed to
4 hiring permanent, full-time mental health
5 counselors during and after this pandemic?

6 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So I'm not
7 sure that that -- about that statistic, about
8 just hiring part-time mental health folks, so
9 I'll double-check on that. But that's why I
10 made the point that we would like to make the
11 money that we used from the stimulus dollars,
12 that we used for two years, we'd like to make
13 that permanent so we have a steady, regular
14 support of in-person and online support for
15 our students' mental health.

16 SENATOR JACKSON: Well, thank you, my
17 time is up -- \$253 million for CUNY and
18 \$253 million for SUNY.

19 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you, Robert
20 Jackson.

21 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you.

22 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Next up is
23 Assemblywoman Rebecca Seawright.

24 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Thank you,

1 Chair Krueger and Chair Weinstein.

2 Chancellor, it's great to see you
3 today. Thank you for your leadership as
4 chancellor of one of the largest public urban
5 university systems in the nation.

6 I know of your long-standing and
7 vigorous efforts to create opportunities for
8 students entering the healthcare professions,
9 but there's still a construction hole in the
10 ground in my district at 74th Street and
11 New York Avenue which should be a new Hunter
12 college facility to serve nursing students
13 and faculty, which we're in need of more than
14 ever now with the pandemic.

15 What can be done to help move this
16 vital project forward?

17 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Well,
18 thank you, Assemblywoman and alum. And also
19 I bring you greetings from the 1,225 students
20 in your district.

21 I forgot to mention the 6,800 in
22 Senator Jackson's district. So my apologies
23 to him.

24 You'll be very happy to hear that we

have issued a request for information to look at potential partnerships that would allow us to really move forward with that space in -- that would support Hunter science and nursing and other health faculty.

So we put out that request for information. We want to see what kinds of partnerships are there so that we can maximize resources and actually bring to fruition this space that we've been talking so long about.

And there's been a lot of interest, so we're very, very enthusiastic about being able to move forward with that project soon.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Terrific.
Thank you, Chancellor.

CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Back to the Senate.

CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: And to Senator Andrew Gounardes.

SENATOR GOUNARDES: Thank you very much, Senator Krueger.

Hello, Chancellor. Good to see you.

I know we've touched on this a little

1 bit, but I want to go back to the proposed
2 funding levels in the Governor's budget this
3 year. The CUNY Board of Trustees in October
4 had asked for an increase of an additional
5 \$313 million in operating support to support
6 a whole host of investments in hiring staff
7 and some research and support services,
8 et cetera, but you're only getting about
9 \$120 million of that. That's a very, very
10 big gap.

11 Do you feel that with the funding that
12 the Governor is proposing you can still meet
13 the kind of goals and expectations that the
14 Board of Trustees has laid out from their
15 original budget request a few months ago?

16 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So thank
17 you, Senator. And again, greetings on behalf
18 of the 10,370 CUNY students that are part of
19 your district.

20 SENATOR GOUNARDES: More than any
21 other district. I represent more CUNY
22 students than any other district, I believe.

23 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Do you
24 want me to --

1 SENATOR GOUNARDES: I want you to
2 answer the question. We can talk more about
3 that later.

4 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Our data
5 has to be high, Senator, comp -- so that -- I
6 don't want to create any competition here.

7 But again, this has been really one of
8 the best budgets from the Executive that CUNY
9 has had in a very, very long time. We're
10 very appreciative of that. We also know that
11 getting to sort of -- you know, longer-term
12 gaps in funding is something that takes time.
13 So this is definitely a step in the right
14 direction. We would like to see additional
15 investment. We put that out there in our
16 request of additional full-time faculty,
17 additional personnel in areas like mental
18 health and career services. But this is
19 clearly a step in the right direction.

20 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Thank you for
21 that.

22 And similarly, on the capital side,
23 you know, the Board of Trustees had asked for
24 437 million; the Governor is proposing 324.

1 That's a much smaller gap.

2 I know you've answered a bunch of
3 questions about the capital, especially from
4 Assemblywoman Seawright. What will that
5 324 million go towards? What are the big
6 capital priorities that CUNY is laying out
7 that they want to tackle with this money
8 moving forward?

9 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: We are
10 actually in the process of addressing, you
11 know, what will we prioritize with those
12 additional dollars.

13 Clearly there's a need for additional
14 critical maintenance. We all, for example,
15 have seen how important things like
16 ventilation that was not too sexy, for
17 example, are so important as we deal with the
18 pandemic. So we'd like to be able to
19 continue some of these investments that we
20 have made in that area.

21 We might be able also to invest in
22 some new projects that we have not been able
23 to in the past, in some of the campuses that
24 have been able to address new or newer

1 facilities. So we are in the process of
2 doing that analysis there.

3 And we'll be happy to receive your
4 feedback and your thoughts as we move forward
5 with that process.

6 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Thank you very
7 much, Chancellor.

8 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.
9 Assemblywoman.

10 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: I actually have
11 a question, Chancellor. If nothing else, if
12 you can tell me how many students I have, and
13 then I have a real question.

14 (Laughter.)

15 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Three
16 thousand nine hundred and twenty-one in your
17 district.

18 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: See, Senator
19 Gounardes, and an Assembly district is much
20 smaller than a Senate district.

21 (Laughter.)

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So in all
23 seriousness, Chancellor, I just was wondering
24 about the CUNY School of Labor and Urban

So we're happy -- I think that's going

1 to be ready fairly -- fairly soon to do that.

2 And at CUNY we have a tradition of
3 working with a lot of museums and other
4 institutions utilizing our space for
5 galleries, for exhibits. So fully supportive
6 if the School of Labor Studies wants to use
7 any of their existing space to collaborate in
8 having exhibits and things of that nature. I
9 think it's a great partnership.

10 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: I guess some of
11 the issue is that it's been so successful,
12 the school, that they need even more space.
13 So that's certainly something we could talk
14 about going forward, I would think.

15 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ:
16 Absolutely. Absolutely. Thank you.

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

18 So now we'll send it back to the
19 Senate.

20 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

21 I see Brad Hoylman just popped up with
22 his hand. So Senator Brad Hoylman.

23 SENATOR HOYLMAN: Thank you,
24 Chairwoman Krueger. I just wanted to follow

1 up on Senator -- thank you, Senator Krueger.

2 I want to follow up on Assemblywoman
3 Seawright's question about capital. Why not
4 use capital that's already afforded in the
5 budget, allocated in the budget, Chancellor,
6 for any new construction at Hunter College,
7 in particular with the nurses' building?

8 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So first,
9 greetings from the 2,949 CUNY students in
10 your district.

11 We have made no determination about
12 how we're going to be using the new capital,
13 right? I mean, it actually still needs to be
14 approved at the end of the budget process.
15 Right? So, you know, we're doing that as is
16 now. There's 25 campuses in the system, and
17 many of them have needs for additional space
18 too. So we will put all those things at the
19 end of the budget process and determine what
20 are the best investments that we can do.
21 There might be some areas also, Senator, in
22 which we can leverage, in public-private
23 partnerships and leverage our state dollars
24 in capital to be able to do more.

1 That's why, for example, this request
2 for information is out there, to be able to
3 see what kinds of creative ways we can use to
4 leverage the good funding that we receive
5 from all of you in a way that it will
6 maximize money for Hunter and for other
7 campuses too.

8 So we have not made any determination.
9 And clearly, if we were not interested in
10 advancing the project, we would not have put
11 the request for information out there.

12 SENATOR HOYLMAN: Okay. Just -- I
13 guess it begs the question we have, you know,
14 hundreds of millions of dollars we dedicate
15 to CUNY for capital, and it's a little
16 frustrating that we as legislators don't know
17 where that money's allocated. But I guess
18 you're telling me that it takes time -- in
19 this case, I guess it takes decades -- to
20 determine.

21 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Well, what
22 I said was -- you were asking about the
23 capital at a location that was proposed in
24 the budget now, and that was what I responded

1 to, saying that we have not made a
2 determination because it hasn't been approved
3 yet, right?

4 We can provide you with the
5 information about all the -- in every year
6 how we have allocated our capital funding
7 request. That has been done.

8 SENATOR HOYLMAN: Is it something you
9 support, the use of capital funding in the
10 budget for this purpose?

11 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Whatever
12 we're going to end up doing at Hunter, we're
13 going to need to have a capital allocation,
14 absolutely. But we're also trying to be
15 proactive and identify other possibilities,
16 like a public-private partnership, that would
17 leverage additional dollars that would allow
18 maybe to even do more than we can do now, if
19 we can bring a different partner in.

20 So we're trying to be as creative as
21 we can to be supportive of a great project
22 and a great opportunity.

23 SENATOR HOYLMAN: And in my district,
24 at the Brookdale Campus, too, on the

1 East Side, I just want to thank you for your
2 support of that and the Macaulay Honors
3 Program.

4 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Assembly.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: I believe we
6 have Assemblywoman Glick for her second round
7 of three minutes.

8 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Very briefly,
9 Chancellor, I think a few members have
10 mentioned the Murphy School of Labor, which
11 the point is they do need some additional
12 space. The reluctance seems to be that some
13 of that space would lie fallow part of the
14 time. The classroom space would be fallow
15 during the day, and that's why they have
16 suggested this alternative use, so that the
17 space that they need, the additional space
18 that they need could be acquired and that
19 CUNY would not feel like it was being
20 underutilized.

21 So I just want to weigh in on that.

22 My question -- my question is around
23 sustainability. Obviously it's a big
24 question. New York City is a large

1 metropolis, and there are lots of things that
2 are on the table. So I'm just wondering what
3 things are CUNY -- what steps has CUNY
4 decided to take, what have they taken
5 already, and what do you see on the horizon?

6 You know, the city is doing things
7 like getting rid of single-use plastics,
8 energy efficiency, all of those things that
9 reduce our carbon footprint and your
10 expenses. But obviously sometimes you have
11 to spend money to make these improvements.

12 Where are you, what are your plans?

13 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So that is
14 a very important priority for all of us. And
15 if you don't mind, I'd much rather maybe have
16 your office -- and share with members here --
17 some of the things that we've done in a
18 comprehensive way.

19 Because, you know, I can talk about,
20 for example, a project at your old campus,
21 Queens College, with NYSERDA, in which we're
22 trying to see if we can store energy in
23 electric vehicles that would serve as a
24 backup for electricity on the campus but then

1 also fuel the -- you know, those vehicles
2 moving forward.

3 So we have, I mean, like this, many,
4 many initiatives. And I'd much rather,
5 instead of using all your time, send you a
6 report on that and then, you know, talk about
7 the ones that you might find more
8 interesting.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: I appreciate
10 that.

11 And I just wanted to say at this point
12 that the focus -- Borough of Manhattan
13 Community College is in my district, and
14 everybody seems to be weighing in on the
15 capital needs around their campuses. So I
16 just would be remiss if I didn't plant a flag
17 for the many needs at -- it is an
18 enormously -- you know, it is so used -- day,
19 night. They have a number of capital needs
20 that I hope will wind up on the list.

21 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you.

22 (Laughter.)

23 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thanks.

24 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Senator

1 Krueger, do you --

2 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you. Yes,
3 I have myself, and then I think I have --

4 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We have an
5 Assemblymember.

6 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Yes, sorry.
7 Myself, then the Assemblymember, then Toby
8 Stavisky.

9 So hello, Chancellor. Nice to see
10 you. How many students do I have? Come on.

11 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Two
12 thousands, four hundred and twenty-six.

13 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you. A lot
14 more coming through -- I think I have three
15 campuses of yours in my district.

16 We've talked about this every time
17 we've ever met, but it's already been raised
18 by Assemblywoman Seawright and Senator
19 Hoylman. Just, again, we need a nursing
20 school. The one you've got is going to
21 collapse underground soon. It's not even a
22 building you own anymore; the City of
23 New York owns it. And we just need to
24 address the crisis ASAP.

1 I'm glad you have an RFP out on it.
2 I'm not telling you how you have to do it.
3 I'm just saying you all know that we have a
4 nursing shortage and it's just almost
5 untenable that we're not doing something to
6 speed along the creation of a new location to
7 train your nurses.

8 So I'm just not -- it's not even a
9 question, I'm just stating it as a fact
10 there.

11 I asked SUNY, so I'll ask you the same
12 thing -- and I don't expect you to know now,
13 but to get back to us all. If we look over
14 10 years, what's the ratio of administrators
15 to faculty in the CUNY system? Because
16 there's a belief that the number of
17 administrators keeps growing as the number of
18 full-time faculty don't keep growing. And
19 that is a concern.

20 But we'd like to see the numbers, and
21 maybe we're wrong. So I did ask CUNY the
22 same question.

23 So then we'll jump into the shocking
24 reduction in the number of students,

1 particularly at CUNY community colleges.

2 I've been here in the Senate long enough to
3 have been around the last recession that
4 almost collapsed the world, back in 2008, and
5 we saw a growth in students because when the
6 economy tanks, usually the pattern is to see
7 an increase in the number of people who go to
8 school, because there aren't really jobs
9 available.

10 And yet in this crash -- granted, a
11 different kind of crash, with a pandemic
12 attached to it. We've seen also a plummet of
13 CUNY students -- and again, my understanding
14 is primarily in the community colleges. And
15 yet at the same time, we've seen -- and my
16 data may be wrong, but it's been reported to
17 me that during the pandemic, the number of
18 New Yorkers who went into the online
19 out-of-state non-certified proprietary
20 colleges doubled, from 45,000 to 90,000.

21 Those are my least favorite models
22 because they have accountability to no one,
23 and the record shows that the outcomes for
24 the vast majority of their students is

1 terrible.

2 So something's not jiving. They're
3 not going to our schools, but they still want
4 to go to school, and they're pouring their
5 money into these online models that are going
6 to fail them, when I keep getting told by
7 CUNY and SUNY for years and years that we're
8 expanding our more successful, effective
9 online options.

10 So help me understand how this all is
11 coming together the wrong way and how we can
12 turn it around.

13 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So lots of
14 things in that last question. I'm equally
15 concerned about the declining enrollment in
16 the community colleges. I do think that the
17 pandemic brings a different kind of economic
18 downturn than the others -- that speaks to
19 mobility, to people's willingness to go
20 places, to -- and so that might be part of
21 the rationale for the increase.

22 Some of the sectors where many of our
23 students are employed part-time and full-time
24 have not come back yet. I think that that's

1 part of the explanation as to why there might
2 be some hesitancy in returning to school or
3 going to programs associated with those
4 areas. That's why I think the part-time TAP
5 is going to be particularly helpful for
6 those.

7 I don't know that we know that the
8 students who are not coming back are the
9 students who are going online elsewhere.
10 Right? And what we need to do is to be the
11 best choice for those students who want to do
12 online, who think that that is their option,
13 that we have the largest number of options
14 for them.

15 And we are investing some of our
16 stimulus money into creating fully online
17 programs using the expertise that we have in
18 our School of Professional Studies, which is
19 ranked among the top 10 online schools in the
20 nation, to use that expertise to assist our
21 campuses to build more online programs for
22 the students for whom that's the option that
23 they want.

24 So this will be a direct response to

1 the point that you're making, and we're
2 making those investments right now using some
3 of the stimulus dollars to be able to do
4 that.

5 And we're also revamping, on the
6 community college side, the applied
7 associate's degrees. Those are the degrees
8 which are not made for you to transfer,
9 right? That they say in this field there's
10 demand, you should be able to come and get a
11 job with an associate's degree.

12 I've asked all my campuses to look at
13 their menu and maybe do away with programs
14 that maybe were good 30 years ago, now not so
15 much, and double down on the ones that are
16 effective.

17 Part of the things that we've been
18 doing with the CEO Jobs Council that was led
19 by Jamie Dimon has been to invest in a couple
20 of new pilot associate's degrees that include
21 apprenticeships, right, for our students.
22 Because I think that those programs are going
23 to be some of the programs that folks are
24 looking for. And if we have more of those, I

1 think we're going to be able to attract more
2 students back.

3 So those are some of the things. I'll
4 be happy to sit down with you and your team
5 and discuss this more, because I do share
6 your concerns on two fronts -- on the
7 community college side, and on losing those
8 online students going elsewhere who should be
9 coming to options at CUNY and SUNY for
10 online.

11 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you. And
12 I -- again, in my reading -- and I'm not the
13 academic here. But in my reading about
14 what's working and not working with online,
15 it's being careful that it's not just you
16 turn on a computer and you stare at it, but
17 interactive classes where you have actual
18 faculty that have Q&A back-and-forth with the
19 students. That you may use, you know, your
20 best lecturers to do the lecture part of
21 classes and then break out into smaller
22 subsections with adjuncts and others to do
23 Q&A and follow-up on written assignments.

24 That, you know, what really doesn't

1 work is just telling a student: Hand me some
2 money, now go start a computer screen for X
3 number of hours and then we'll call it a day.

4 So I do urge you to look at, you know,
5 the models that seem to be the most
6 successful.

7 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: And those
8 are -- if I -- that is exactly why we're
9 doing the investment we're doing with SPS as
10 the lead, because that is exactly the kind of
11 quality control that we want for our online
12 programs.

13 So you are quite the expert, and those
14 are exactly the things that we want to
15 replicate, not just open a Zoom and there's
16 no quality there.

17 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Correct. Because
18 we're not doing any young people in New York
19 a favor if we've got 90,000 of them signed up
20 for crap online education with no standards
21 applied.

22 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: Yup.

23 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: We're really not.

24 Thank you. I'm going to cede back the

1 rest of my time. Assemblywoman?

2 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
3 Assemblywoman Simon, three minutes.

4 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Thank you.
5 Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you,
6 Chancellor. It's good to see you. I have --

7 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: And you.

8 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Thank you.

9 I have one question about capital. I
10 know we've talked about it, but I'm curious
11 what the CUNY system is doing in its analysis
12 of its capital needs that are consistent with
13 the CLCPA and the constitutional right to a
14 clean and healthy environment.

15 What are we doing to look at our CUNY
16 capital about its carbon footprint and
17 planning for the future? So that's one
18 question.

19 And then the other is -- just maybe a
20 comment on this issue about debt relief. And
21 I know that for our students, many of them
22 end up not paying much in the way of tuition.
23 But there is so much else that is about
24 money. And -- so I recommend, if you haven't

1 read it already, the opinion piece by Tara
2 Westover, who wrote the book "Educated." And
3 what she talks about is when she got a Pell
4 grant is when she finally was able to take
5 care of her health, she was able to actually
6 become a student. And that it wasn't about
7 financial -- it wasn't about money, it was
8 about financial security and freedom, the
9 freedom to actually plan her life.

10 So it's something I think everybody
11 should read, and I really would like to have
12 further conversations about that issue.

13 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So thank
14 you again for those questions.

15 You know, I also want to bring you
16 greetings on behalf of the 1,385 students
17 from CUNY in your district.

18 We are -- I mean, ASAP is part of our
19 model of a comprehensive approach to your
20 point about supporting students in different
21 kinds of needs.

22 I think, moving forward, we need to do
23 some of those things in-house, and we also
24 need to be a better connector with some other

1 nonprofits and other ones who are doing those
2 services out there too, so it's not something
3 we have to provide but we just need to make
4 sure the student -- the student gets what
5 they need, right. And that might be from us,
6 but that might be from an outside program,
7 government or nonprofit.

8 Let me, if you don't mind, allow our
9 COO, Hector Batista, to address a couple of
10 your things about the carbon footprint,
11 because that's a lot more in his immediate
12 expertise.

13 Hector?

14 CUNY COO BATISTA: Thank you,
15 Chancellor.

16 Assemblywoman, thank you for your
17 question.

18 With regards to our capital projects,
19 I mean we make it part of any procurement
20 that we do, any construction project that we
21 do, that at the forefront on all of those is
22 to meet the carbon footprint goals that we
23 have to meet. And we're at 22 percent right
24 now for a goal of 35 percent by the year

1 2025.

2 So we feel very confident that
3 everything that we're doing at CUNY is going
4 to get us to that number, if not exceed that
5 number. And part of that process is to make
6 sure that as we're thinking through capital
7 projects or construction projects, that the
8 environmental impact that that's going to
9 have not only in that campus, but in the
10 community, is taken into account.

11 I'm happy to report that we have, you
12 know, a host of charging stations in our
13 campuses and that we have launched a study to
14 make sure that those stations and that
15 footprint continues to have the impact that
16 it needs to have, from solar panels and --
17 multiple around campus. So, you know, it is
18 a goal that the chancellor has charged us
19 with, and one that we take obviously
20 extremely seriously.

21 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Thank you.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Back to the
23 Senate.

24 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you. And I

1 believe the only Senator left -- always have
2 to be careful with us -- is Toby Stavisky for
3 a three-minute second round. I believe I'm
4 correct.

5 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you. Thank
6 you.

7 And Chancellor, on behalf of the
8 wonderful two CUNY institutions in my
9 district, Queensborough Community College and
10 Queens College, I thank you.

11 And I wanted two things, real quick.
12 I want to associate myself with what Senator
13 Krueger said about the online out-of-state
14 institutions. These are very dubious
15 institutions and I have grave misgivings,
16 particularly when it comes to TAP for the
17 incarcerated -- I just get a feeling that
18 they see something here, and I do not want to
19 see that happen. I think CUNY and SUNY and
20 the independent colleges could certainly do a
21 better job.

22 And as far as the Labor College is
23 concerned, it is -- it's increasing in
24 enrollment. We've got to make sure that

1 those students stay. They represent the
2 working men and women in New York City and
3 New York State, and it's really a wonderful
4 college.

5 Let me ask a couple of quick
6 questions. We've been talking about virtual
7 learning. Has there been any way to evaluate
8 the success or failure of the virtual
9 learning experience for the students?

10 CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ: So we did,
11 in the first year of the pandemic, along with
12 Ithaca, research on that effectiveness. So,
13 you know, I can make that study available to
14 all of you.

15 At the end of the day, right, what we
16 want is different modalities that fit
17 different students' needs. If you learn
18 better online, we want the best teaching
19 available to you online for you to succeed.
20 If it's in-person, in-person hybrid. So we
21 have to talk about quality instruction all
22 across the modalities, right, and meeting the
23 students where they need.

24 I think that the pandemic has allowed

us to look more at the online. We want to continue to do that in a quality way. But again, we want quality teaching in whatever modality, and to be getting data on student success on them so that we can advise you properly.

SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

And in terms of the childcare, bringing the childcare program to campuses that don't have it right now, are you prepared to -- I think it's a great idea, so are you prepared to implement it?

CUNY CHANCELLOR RODRÍGUEZ:

Absolutely.

And if you would allow me, I'll be remiss -- and many of you will do this -- in that this might be the last budget hearing which we have our beloved colleague Matt Sapienza as a CFO, as he goes into new ventures beginning in February, so I want to give two seconds to Matt to address the group and for you to salute his great contributions.

I know that you have all loved working

1 with Matt over the years, and we've been
2 lucky to have him. And I do want to
3 acknowledge him.

4 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you, Matt.

5 CUNY CFO SAPIENZA: Thanks so much,
6 Chancellor.

7 And many thanks to all of our
8 colleagues here in the Assembly and Senate
9 for their great advocacy for CUNY and all of
10 public higher education over the years. It's
11 been a pleasure serving, and certainly a
12 pleasure working under our great chancellor,
13 Matos Rodríguez. So thank you very much.

14 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you, Matt.

15 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you, Matt,
16 for your service.

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

18 So we end this portion of the hearing,
19 and we will move on to the New York State
20 Education Department. And we welcome back to
21 this hearing Commissioner Betty Rosa.

22 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Thank you.

23 Good afternoon, everyone. Let me
24 start by thanking for this opportunity

1 Chairs Krueger, Weinstein, Stavisky, Glick,
2 and members of the Senate and Assembly here
3 today.

4 I'm Dr. Betty Rosa, the commissioner
5 of Education, and I'm joined by Executive
6 Deputy Commissioner Sharon Cates-Williams,
7 Senior Deputy Commissioner Dr. Jim Baldwin,
8 Chief Financial Officer Phyllis Morris,
9 Deputy Commissioner Sarah Benson, and Deputy
10 Commissioner Dr. Bill Murphy.

11 I also want to thank Chancellor Young
12 and our Board of Regents, including our
13 chairs, who are watching today.

14 The Regents and the department, as you
15 know, have two strategic priorities. The
16 first is to create equity for all students to
17 prepare for college, careers, and civic
18 engagement. And the second is to
19 fundamentally shift to a service-and-support-
20 oriented approach for our statewide
21 educational community and the public.

22 To achieve both priorities, the
23 department needs the funding we requested to
24 hire and maintain appropriate staffing

1 levels. The severe spending and hiring
2 constraints imposed in April 2020 worsened
3 the impact of a long hiring freeze on the
4 department's capacity to achieve these
5 priorities.

6 The department's full-time equivalent
7 FTE staffing went from 3200 in 2008-'09 to
8 2500 in 2021-'22, a decrease of 22 percent.

9 In response to the Division of
10 Budget's October 2021 call letter, the
11 department requested funding for 302
12 positions to rebuild our capacity. We are
13 encouraged that the Executive Budget includes
14 funding for 134 of these positions,
15 44 percent of the positions requested.
16 however, full funding to support all 302
17 positions is needed.

18 There are several proposals in the
19 Executive Budget we are very pleased with,
20 including the expansion of the TAP program to
21 part-time students, and restoring TAP for
22 incarcerated individuals; the increase to the
23 department's access and opportunity programs,
24 which include Liberty Partnerships Program,

1 HEOP, STEP, CSTEP and Foster Youth; and also
2 the increase in the Readers Aid program by
3 \$700,000.

4 However, there are Executive proposals
5 of concern that need your thoughtful
6 consideration.

7 First, we strongly oppose transferring
8 oversight of 42 healthcare professions from
9 the department's Office of Professions, OP,
10 to the Department of Health on January 1,
11 2023.

12 OP ensures competent professional
13 practice, aligning the state's system of
14 educational preparation, licensure and
15 professional oversight under the single
16 umbrella of the Board of Regents, which is
17 elected by the Legislature. Allowing the
18 agency that regulates healthcare facilities
19 to oversee licensed practitioners results in
20 conflicting objectives, and it's not in the
21 public's best interests.

22 Instead, fully funding and staffing OP
23 each year would allow OP to be more
24 responsive to the needs of our customers,

1 their employers, and the public.

2 Second, the department urges a
3 thoughtful and thorough review before
4 considering the Executive proposal to enter
5 New York State into the Interstate Medical
6 and Nurse Licensure compacts. Our Board of
7 Regents has directed our staff to fully
8 examine these compacts to see what may be
9 possible and in what professions this may
10 make sense.

11 We have already started that process.
12 We have been in conversations with the
13 Department of Health, and we've been in
14 conversations with the new, amazing Dr. Mary
15 Bassett.

16 It is important to note that these
17 compacts require member states to adopt the
18 same standards in law without modification.
19 For example, compacts mandate applicants to
20 submit a Social Security number and
21 background checks. Neither is currently
22 needed for New York State licensure. This
23 could adversely affect foreign, DACA and
24 low-income applicants and may also have

1 unintended consequences related to the "BSN
2 in 10" law, since this is not a compact
3 standard.

4 To address the concerns of enabling
5 out-of-state licensees to obtain New York
6 State licensure more quickly, the department
7 has developed and will roll out a new "Fast
8 Track" pathway for licensed nurses and
9 physicians. This will maintain New York
10 State standards for licensure and practice
11 without ceding our authority to a
12 nongovernmental agency.

13 We oppose the Executive's proposal to
14 allow new programs of study offered by
15 certain not-for-profit colleges to be
16 temporarily approved 45 days after submitting
17 a completed application.

18 Currently most of these approvals
19 occur within 30 days of receipt of an
20 application by our staff, and 96 percent
21 within 60 days. This independent and
22 objective review of the integrity of proposed
23 degree programs is the single line of defense
24 protecting the educational and financial

1 interests of students, and the investment of
2 taxpayers' dollars in financial aid programs.

3 The Board of Regents and the
4 department do not want to stand in the way of
5 innovation, but we do want to ensure that our
6 students and their time are invested in
7 quality higher education programs.

8 In conclusion, we request the
9 Legislature provide additional investments to
10 enhance support and services for students
11 with disabilities to ensure success in
12 college and further equity for all.

13 Thank you, and I look forward to your
14 questions and providing any additional
15 information that you so desire. Thank you
16 for this opportunity.

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you,
18 Commissioner.

19 Assemblywoman Glick, did you have
20 questions?

21 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Yes.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
23 Assemblywoman Glick for 10 minutes.

24 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you.

1 A couple of questions. You refer to
2 your review period for program approval. Of
3 the 134 lines that you have been authorized,
4 how many would wind up going to the program
5 approval division?

6 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Well, first
7 of all, let me just start by saying, before I
8 ask Sarah, that it's not the approval of the
9 59 positions, right, that would go over. And
10 that's one issue.

11 But I think the other issue is that
12 the way that we found out about this was
13 during a budget conversation. So we've had
14 no real exchange and opportunity to really
15 understand the rationale, to really
16 understand what's the thinking behind this.

17 So I think the positions is one issue.
18 The fact that the sweeps -- the 2.8 million
19 sweeps have been of real concern, in order to
20 really build our growing responsibilities,
21 the freeze impact it demands. And actually
22 the last year, the reduction by 10 percent of
23 our budget has really, really been critical.

24 Sarah?

1 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON: Sure.

2 Thank you, Commissioner.

3 Assemblywoman, in terms of staff
4 dedicated to program review approvals, on the
5 OP side we did request 59 additional
6 positions, and some of them would go towards
7 professional licensure qualifying program
8 review.

9 Are you also asking about, on the
10 higher ed side, the number of positions?

11 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Yes. Let me
12 preface it by saying that over a period of
13 time the department has been systematically
14 starved. And as a result, there are either
15 organizations like colleges and universities
16 or professional groups that have requested
17 different approaches from SED, including this
18 rather strange one to remove all of the
19 oversight and move it to DOH, which as far as
20 I know does not have the capacity or the
21 expertise at this point to handle it, while
22 you have been building out a licensure
23 renewal and electronic program.

24 So I'm just wondering if there are

1 going to be -- I believe the Governor has
2 included some new positions in the budget.
3 I'm wondering how that's going to be utilized
4 and what kind of shortfall that continues to
5 present to you.

6 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Sure.

7 So in the proposed budget there were
8 11 positions that were in terms of looking at
9 our vacancies and nine -- right now we are
10 backfilling 11 positions plus nine more for
11 recruiting.

12 But the fact of the matter is we also,
13 as you know, have had to use our own funding
14 for the 9 million for modernization to
15 enhance the TEACH certification application
16 system in order to reduce processing time.
17 So the 11 positions that have been committed
18 to are positions that obviously we will -- we
19 have been raising our own funding.

20 And I'd like, at this time, Phyllis to
21 give you -- and we will submit as well in
22 writing -- the specific details of what it
23 means in terms of those 11 positions.

24 Phyllis?

1 NYSED CFO MORRIS: So thank you,
2 Commissioner. In terms of the office of
3 teaching initiatives, the 11 positions that
4 we asked for to help with teacher
5 certification processing, we -- the Division
6 of Budget has indicated that we are to use
7 our own -- the amount of money that was
8 provided, basically underspending in other
9 areas, to pay for those positions.

10 So that's not really a tenable way to
11 fund those positions. We need dedicated
12 funding to be able to support those
13 positions.

14 I think your question might have had
15 to do with OCUE, the Office of College and
16 University Evaluation, with regard to the
17 program approval question specifically. And
18 we did ask for four additional positions, and
19 we did not receive funding in the Executive
20 Budget for those four positions.

21 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Okay.

22 NYSED CFO MORRIS: And we can provide
23 a comprehensive list of everything we asked
24 for and what we did and didn't get.

1 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: I think that
2 would be very helpful. I have heard from
3 obviously various colleges that they have
4 delays in getting responses. But, you know,
5 I talked to the department and aside from
6 shortfalls in your personnel, there are also
7 the realities that not all information is
8 always provided in a timely fashion.

9 So I think one thing that could be
10 helpful is a more immediate response from the
11 department to those who have submitted what I
12 will refer to as insufficient information to
13 allow you to do a full review. So I think
14 some of it is that kind of feedback loop
15 being a little bit faster.

16 The other thing that is deeply
17 concerning to me is the Interstate Medical
18 Compact. I do not believe that New Yorkers
19 tend to travel to various states with lesser
20 standards for their healthcare, and I'm
21 wondering why New York State would accept
22 professionals from other states that may not
23 have the same degree of training and
24 education to practice here.

1 Is that exactly what is being
2 proposed?

3 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: What's -- so
4 we've been -- just so you know, we have been
5 in extensive conversation and even through
6 the process from the Regents request, we have
7 been having conversations with the Department
8 of Health. I know Sarah had a conversation
9 today that was scheduled. I've been speaking
10 with Commissioner Bassett over this issue and
11 trying to find and discuss what are our major
12 concerns with Social Security and some of the
13 other issues in terms of adopting the
14 standards and having a full understanding of
15 what the implications are.

16 As I said, we are open to have the
17 discussion with just -- right now, and we
18 don't believe that this would be in our best
19 interest. And so we are currently not
20 supporting it without really seriously
21 understanding what the benefits would be.

22 And I know some people say there are
23 40 other states that do this. But, you know,
24 we do have the issues with -- that we do not

1 require, as I said in my introduction, the
2 fingerprints and some of the other
3 situations.

4 But Sarah, I know we've been in
5 extensive conversation on this, so you may
6 want to add the latest issue in discussions
7 with DOH.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON:

9 Certainly. No, I'm happy to. I think that
10 there's a lot of complicating -- and it's not
11 things we're going to solve in a short
12 conversation. There's a lot of complicating
13 factors. There's a lot of information.

14 The fact that we do have different
15 standards potentially creates two different
16 pathways into licensure. That is problematic
17 administratively but also problematic in
18 terms of qualifying two different sets of
19 people to do the same job and get the same
20 credential. So I welcome an offline
21 conversation about some of those details.

22 I would also say in my conversation
23 today with the Department of Health, we are
24 very mindful of the workforce shortage

1 concerns and the need to get more
2 practitioners into New York and the real,
3 very real challenges that are being faced.
4 But I think that there are some opportunities
5 to explore other ways to do that, including
6 potentially extending some of the executive
7 order provisions or variations on that, in a
8 way that may make more sense in terms of
9 addressing shorter-term solutions.

10 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you.

11 It's -- it would seem to me that the
12 department has a very broad purview in the
13 budget. I'm just wondering whether or not
14 your budget -- to what extent would you rate
15 your budget request and what wound up in the
16 budget? Is that a B minus, a C? Where are
17 we in terms of seeing a -- a support for the
18 department to do its multivaried tasks in a
19 reasonable time frame?

20 I think that's some of the complaints
21 that we have heard over the years that I
22 don't think are necessarily fair given the
23 short deck with which you've been dealt.

24 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Well, thank

1 you. I think that part of what we've been
2 trying to do is look at the fact that the
3 state is flush with cash at this time. And
4 since we have been in many ways -- we have
5 experienced, as I said, growing
6 responsibilities, impacted by what I already
7 shared -- the freeze impact, the 10 percent
8 sweep -- you know, the sweeps that we've had
9 in OP for a long time, and not being able to
10 invest that back into the hiring practices.

11 I would say that overall, and I'm
12 going to do it on the P-20, because obviously
13 we look at it across all the needs and all
14 the demands, that I personally, along with my
15 team, feel that the budget, when you think
16 about 134 positions when we requested 302 to
17 even get back to the 2008 number of FTEs of,
18 you know, 3200 -- we really feel that this
19 budget has not been responsive and as
20 responsive as we obviously would be
21 expecting, given the financial conditions.

22 So I'm not ready to give it a number.
23 As a good teacher I have to think about your
24 question and look at the complete composite.

1 But I certainly would not give it anywhere in
2 the A category.

3 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very
4 much. My time's expired.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.
6 Back to the Senate.

7 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

8 And first to Higher Education Chair
9 Toby Stavisky.

10 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you. Thank
11 you, Commissioner.

12 First let me ask you about the shift
13 in positions and the oversight from SED to
14 the Department of Health. What are the
15 quality -- if you were issuing a job search,
16 what are the qualities that you would put
17 into that search for people to deal with
18 oversight over the professions, the
19 licensure, et cetera, that perhaps DOH may
20 not have?

21 I've heard the commissioner of Health
22 testify that she was short -- she was
23 understaffed, to use her phrase, and short I
24 think it was 500 positions.

1 So what are the qualities that SED
2 would look for? That may not be present in
3 DOH.

4 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: I think
5 that -- and again, for us the issue of the
6 standards that we set in place for what we
7 expect the public to have in terms of the
8 various professions is critical.

9 I think the moral character of
10 individuals is extremely -- our Regents meet,
11 as you know, every month to deal with many of
12 these issues that are sometimes looking at
13 licensing issues in terms of restoration,
14 revoking, all of the above. We want the
15 very, very best quality of individuals that
16 can in fact support the public, support our
17 various communities by knowing that these
18 individuals, not only from an educational
19 perspective and the quality of the practices,
20 but also in terms of when we review the
21 credentials, that we in fact can stand behind
22 these individuals as they move forward to do
23 the work. Whether it's in nursing homes or
24 it's in our hospitals, we know that we want

1 the very, very best individuals to do this
2 kind of work.

3 And I know Sarah has done an amazing
4 job working -- and still keeping the
5 service-oriented approach, working -- trying
6 to work with the Department of Health, they
7 have meetings ongoing monthly -- I did chair
8 those with Commissioner Bassett -- to really
9 find the kinds of solutions, the kinds of
10 support that we maintain the integrity and
11 the quality of our professionals.

12 Sarah?

13 SENATOR STAVISKY: Oh, did you want to
14 add? Okay.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON: I would
16 only add that our focus in the Office of
17 Professions is always on public health and
18 safety. And with that focus, we have the
19 luxury in some ways of not being as concerned
20 about staffing numbers or reimbursement or
21 financial concerns. Our focus really is on
22 preparing and making sure that the
23 educational qualifications and the full
24 preparation of those licensees ensures safe

1 practice.

2 And so in terms of what do we look for
3 and what is our focus, that is our focus.

4 And so I think our focus is a little
5 different than Department of Health. And
6 those two things work well together as a
7 balance to ensure appropriate long-term needs
8 are met. So I think there is a very
9 different viewpoint that we bring to that
10 equation.

11 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

12 Getting on to the program approval,
13 the changes that the Executive made in her
14 budget -- and I know that it does not apply
15 to the professional licensure or the master
16 plan amendments, et cetera, but other
17 programs as well.

18 How would this affect the students in
19 terms of needing courses to graduate,
20 et cetera?

21 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Okay, on
22 that one I'm going to tell you that of course
23 it's going to affect the students in terms of
24 meeting -- when we think about quantity, to

1 Sarah's point, versus quality, it is going to
2 have an effect on the training, on the
3 professional way that we prepare our
4 students.

5 And some of this work we have been
6 having internal conversations, particularly,
7 you know, around our P-20 conversation. And
8 I know Jim has been doing an incredible job
9 in looking at this, as somebody who formerly
10 was involved in -- as president of a
11 higher ed institution.

12 Jim?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURPHY: Thank
14 you, Commissioner.

15 Senator, the potential impact on
16 students could be quite significant. If a
17 college were to submit a program and within
18 45 -- after 45 days commence that program, if
19 we were to subsequently find that the program
20 could not be approved, those students, the
21 time that they've invested, would have been
22 wasted. The initiative that they took to
23 enroll in that program would have been
24 misdirected.

1 And while there is a requirement that
2 there be a refund of any tuition that was
3 paid, there would also be implications for
4 that particular student's financial aid
5 situation, assuming that they had taken a
6 loan or that they were in some other way
7 receiving taxpayer-supported financial aid.

8 So while it sounds like a good idea,
9 when you just step beneath that idea you
10 realize that there are implications not only
11 for the institutions -- because what it
12 really does is deprive us and them of the
13 opportunity to get answers to the questions
14 that we pose when there are issues, and it
15 also creates significant possible disruption
16 in the educational process for the students
17 who enroll in those programs.

18 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

19 Let me get on to a totally different
20 issue. The Governor and the previous
21 governor have issued a lot of executive
22 orders allowing people to go way beyond their
23 scope of practice, many of the professions to
24 go way beyond their scope of practice.

1 How do you feel about requests that --
2 certainly there are issues that have come
3 before the Higher Ed Committee -- that say,
4 well, there have been no bad things that have
5 happened, therefore let us continue and put
6 into statute the executive orders that were
7 issued by the Governor. How do you feel
8 about that?

9 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Well, I
10 think we were obviously -- I don't know that
11 we're out of the pandemic yet, although I
12 think that some people would like to think
13 that, you know, and be hopeful that we're
14 around the corner from this.

15 I always think when we have these
16 kinds of situations that, you know, while
17 some people may say having time for a
18 feasibility study, having time to analyze the
19 data, having time to really look at what
20 worked and what didn't -- and that is
21 critical in this kind of situation.

22 Rather than just to rush and say
23 nothing happened, and therefore let's just,
24 you know, adopt these decisions. I don't

1 believe that that is -- that that is the
2 approach that I would certainly support or
3 recommend.

4 I think that we really have to do a
5 real deep analysis of the process and in fact
6 look at a closer look as to, you know, what
7 actually did work and have the data support
8 those decisions.

9 SENATOR STAVISKY: The pharmacists
10 particularly have been a major area of
11 expansion of the EO.

12 In the remaining 90 seconds, do you
13 have any problems with the Collaborative Drug
14 Therapy Management program and the expansion
15 of their functions in the budget?

16 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Well, we've
17 had conversations with some of the
18 pharmacists. Sarah -- and I'm going to use
19 the quick couple of minutes to say what some
20 of our conversations have led to.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON: So
22 certainly, thank you. I think the answers to
23 those things may be different, Senator.

24 Certainly there's a variety of

1 proposals out there, and I think that each
2 one needs to be looked at individually to
3 determine whether or not pharmacists are
4 educated, tested and appropriate to do things
5 on a long-term basis that they may not have
6 in their current scope. We welcome those
7 conversations with you. Happy to participate
8 in that.

9 I think as far as CDTM, the current --
10 making current -- making permanent the
11 current provisions is nothing that we have
12 any objection to. Expansion is something we
13 certainly should talk about and we're happy
14 to collaborate on anything that is helpful to
15 you.

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

17 Well, there's only 15 seconds, so we
18 thank you for your testimony today. Thank
19 you.

20 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you, Toby.
21 Assemblywoman.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
23 Assemblyman Walczyk, the ranking member, for
24 five minutes.

1 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Thank you,
2 Madam Chair.

3 Commissioner, wonderful to speak with
4 you again.

5 Commissioner, the teachers are aging
6 out in our system and we're already facing a
7 teacher shortage. This is one of the
8 questions that I didn't get to with the
9 chancellor. But I was wondering what you
10 could tell me about the Governor's budget in
11 regards to, you know, assistance or
12 incentives to incentivize, you know, high
13 school kids to get into the teaching
14 profession.

15 Because we know it's already an issue
16 now, and everything that we've learned about
17 our teaching colleges and comprehensives is
18 telling us that it's going to just be an
19 expounded issue in the future as we face a
20 greater teacher shortage.

21 So I was just wondering what you could
22 tell me about the Governor's budget in that
23 respect.

24 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Sure.

1 So first I think we have looked at the
2 issue even prior to the Governor's budget,
3 knowing that we are in a crisis, right, and
4 that we're in a crisis that has been really
5 exacerbated by COVID.

6 And we also know that we're trying to
7 also, through DEI, as you know, trying to
8 create a diverse, you know, teaching force.
9 And we're trying to also -- really using all
10 the different tools and resources, whether
11 it's through My Brother's Keeper, engaging
12 young high school students early in being
13 interested in education -- we're working with
14 different stakeholders to really address some
15 of these issues, and with superintendents.

16 We're also looking at -- for example,
17 we know that there's some successful programs
18 like the TOC II. And while we were
19 disappointed that the funding wasn't there,
20 we're hopeful that that is one program that
21 we do receive the \$5 million that we really
22 truly believe will expand the program.

23 We have been also looking at
24 residencies, right? Teaching assistants. If

1 you look, you will see that we've got to
2 create a pipeline, we've got to look to
3 places where we know that there's an
4 investment in teaching assistants coming into
5 the field. Let's use the residency programs
6 to support those individuals with grants,
7 with ways that we can turn them into the
8 future teachers.

9 So I think looking at multiple ways,
10 multiple pathways to support bringing people
11 into the field, looking at individuals who
12 have a particular core talent in this -- CTE
13 teachers, teachers that are interested in
14 working with students with special needs, and
15 really working at trying to create
16 flexibilities, as you know the department has
17 done, and the Board of Regents. But also
18 creating very intentional ways of bringing
19 them into the field and engaging them in
20 working with our communities and our
21 students.

22 So we're using multiple ways of
23 addressing the shortages and multiple ways of
24 engaging all of our communities and

1 stakeholders to really make sure that our
2 teachers -- our future teachers are coming
3 from high school students who go through, you
4 know, Teachers of Tomorrow, through My
5 Brother's Keeper, through residency, through
6 ways of incentivizing individuals that truly
7 want to come into the field by making --
8 creating flexibility but also creating
9 opportunities for them to be successful in
10 these spaces.

11 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Thank you, and I
12 appreciate that. I know it will be a
13 continued dialogue.

14 When are we going to allow schools the
15 autonomy to make decisions on their
16 day-to-day operations with their local health
17 departments, instead of edicts from Albany,
18 when it comes to masking, vaccination,
19 testing policies, that kind of thing? When
20 are we going to put that onus back on the
21 local school districts?

22 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Well, I
23 think that you know that we have been engaged
24 with trying to really work -- even before

1 Dr. Zucker exited, the department really took
2 a lead in trying to work with school
3 districts in terms of specific needs.

4 The pandemic obviously has very
5 specific mitigation strategies, that we're
6 all making sure that we follow the science.
7 At the same time, you know that the
8 Department of Health has also been working
9 with the local departments of health to
10 ensure that the communities are safe.

11 We have been asking for metrics, as
12 you know, to ensure that we have a
13 destination in mind, with a roadmap, and with
14 the metrics to get us there. And that has
15 been for the department, for us, something
16 very, very specific in terms of having that
17 as a way of making sure that the field
18 understands where we're going and how we're
19 going to get there.

20 ASSEMBLYMAN WALCZYK: Commissioner,
21 you know how to burn five minutes.

22 Thanks, Madam Chair.

23 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

24 Back to the Senate.

1 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

2 And we're joined now by Andrew
3 Gounardes.

4 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Thank you,
5 Senator Krueger.

6 Hello, Commissioner, how are you?

7 I have two questions. First, I want
8 to talk about SED's role in oversight over
9 the New York City Department of Education
10 response to addressing its backlog of special
11 education reimbursement cases. I know that
12 there has been some movement on this over the
13 last couple of months, that this has been an
14 ongoing thing for years.

15 I have constituents who are --
16 literally have taken out \$400,000 of debt
17 waiting for their city to process their
18 application, look at the application, and
19 then get their reimbursement. Four hundred
20 thousand dollars for a working-class family
21 is unconscionable.

22 What are we doing to make sure that we
23 are addressing this problem from the state
24 perspective?

1 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Sure.

2 So we will send you additional
3 information because we have been, over the
4 last -- as you know, the backlog has been in
5 place for several years. And we have been
6 trying through various chancellors and
7 mayors, right, trying to address this issue
8 of the backlog. Working -- working with
9 advocates, working with the department.

10 At the same time, as you know, last
11 year thank God we had the opportunity to have
12 a bill, the IHO and also OATH, and we've been
13 having very extensive conversations with the
14 city, both the mayor's office as well as the
15 chancellor, to really make this a top
16 priority to respond to not only the needs of
17 our special ed students but also -- in terms
18 of services and placement, but also to
19 respond to, to your point, to make sure that
20 these issues are addressed.

21 And so they are working on full-time
22 impartial hearing officers so we can move
23 this backlog forward. And I know --

24 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Thank you.

1 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: You know, I
2 will give you a report of the latest
3 conversation.

4 SENATOR GOUNARDES: I would appreciate
5 following up with you after this. Thank you
6 very much.

7 My second question, shifting gears a
8 little bit, we have heard a lot during our
9 budget hearings this year about a pending
10 crisis in our mental health system, and that
11 we don't have the workforce to meet the needs
12 of children and families and individuals who
13 are seeking help.

14 The last couple of decades there have
15 been several exemptions that have been
16 granted in several categories of mental
17 health professionals to allow them to help
18 step in and address this staffing crisis.
19 But those exemptions are all expiring, I
20 understand, this year.

21 There is some proposed legislation
22 that I believe my colleague Senator Brouk has
23 introduced to kind of help modernize all of
24 these occupational requirements and licensing

1 credentials. And I just want to get your
2 take as to whether you think that would be
3 sufficient and that will help us address the
4 staffing crisis that we're heading into by
5 trying to take this approach of modernizing
6 these professions.

7 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Well, I
8 think that's one aspect of it. But I think,
9 similar to education, we have to do a better
10 job in recruiting, retaining, preparing,
11 right, the profession.

12 And also one of the things that we've
13 been -- we started to do early on was with
14 the funding from the feds, we did suggest to
15 the schools, along with working with the
16 commissioner of Mental Health, to really
17 invest, to really align and see the
18 importance of trauma, the importance of
19 mental health as part of the whole sphere of
20 looking at the landscape of education and
21 teaching and learning, so that it is a
22 partner, it is a critical partner.

23 And so we want not only the
24 recruiting, but we also want the flexibility,

1 to your point. But we need to increase the
2 footprint of these individuals in our
3 schools, in our community schools, and in our
4 communities.

5 SENATOR GOUNARDES: Thank you.

6 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.
7 Assembly.

8 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
9 Assemblyman Epstein, three minutes.

10 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you,
11 Chair.

12 And always great to see you,
13 Commissioner.

14 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: So, you know,
15 two years into a pandemic, is that a point
16 where we need to just get rid of standardized
17 testing and Regents exams because they're
18 just so hard to take at this point?

19 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Well, thank
20 you for the question.

21 Since we did have a conversation with
22 USDE last week, we are in the process of
23 looking -- obviously, you know, we've been
24 doing for over two years at this -- almost

1 two years, the grad measures to look at our
2 graduation, what our diploma signifies. And
3 we are looking at assessment and the
4 importance of assessment and looking at
5 multiple ways of assessing our students.

6 So we are in conversation. More than
7 glad to share with you our latest with the
8 department, USDE, and also internally some of
9 the suggestions -- and I know Jim even had a
10 conversation with some of the superintendents
11 on Friday.

12 So we are definitely looking at
13 multiple ways of assessing our students and
14 making sure that we have a composite and not
15 relying so heavily on our high-stakes -- and
16 still maintaining the integrity of our
17 standards work that you know is critical to
18 student success.

19 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: And I appreciate
20 that. And I look forward to continuing to
21 talk to you about this, because it's
22 something, as you know, that I care about.

23 So some of these schools that are CSI
24 and TSI-designated institutions, you know, we

1 have really, really, really old data now.
2 And we've talked about pathways out. Is
3 there a way we can do that now for these
4 schools that like have alternate assessments
5 and we need a pathway out for them?

6 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: So thank you
7 for that, because that was the main piece of
8 this conversation, which is the
9 accountability part, which is what you're
10 asking about.

11 So the accountability discussion on
12 Friday was exactly this, that we can't just
13 turn the switch back on without, you know,
14 data from 2019. The kids didn't take the
15 test in 2020. Forty percent last year
16 doesn't exactly tell us a great deal, and who
17 was part of the test versus who was not.

18 So we are -- as you know, we put out
19 the waiver, we were denied, and we're still
20 challenging the issue of the waiver. And so
21 our meeting on Friday was to continue to
22 challenge this identification process.

23 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Well, whatever
24 support I can provide, I'd appreciate. I'm

1 happy to provide that.

2 And the last question -- I know I only
3 have 30 seconds left -- is what institutions
4 of higher education might try to access some
5 of this TAP funding for students who are
6 incarcerated, and what oversight we're going
7 to have to ensure that anyone who has access
8 to it. I know that's because you're going to
9 oversee the TAP. But since you're going to
10 oversee institutions, you know, I'm concerned
11 that these are vulnerable students that are
12 going to be maybe reaching at some straws --
13 how are we going to make sure that they're
14 high-quality institutions that are working
15 with them?

16 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Absolutely.
17 I'm going to turn this to Jim, as we've been
18 having some internal conversations about the
19 importance, to your point, of making sure
20 that we really put in place a system that
21 monitors this.

22 Jim?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURPHY: Sure,
24 thank you.

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

2 We're going to go back to -- the
3 time's expired. We're going to --

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURPHY: We
5 will -- we'll get you an answer.

6 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Great, thank
7 you.

8 We're going to send it back to the
9 Senate.

10 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

11 Next, Robert Jackson.

12 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you.

13 Commissioner, good afternoon. And to
14 all of your executive staff, appreciate all
15 the work you're doing.

16 Understanding what you had said, you
17 put in a budget request for several hundred
18 positions, and you only got about 30 percent
19 of what you really needed. Not good.

20 But I have a couple of quick
21 questions. Do you support Tier 6 pension
22 reform to help recruit and retain educators?

23 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: I will
24 support -- and again, we have to look at

1 language, right? But I will support any --
2 any process that helps us to recruit and
3 retain teachers as well as social workers and
4 others.

5 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay. That's a good
6 answer.

7 Then I have another simple question.
8 Do you support CUNY and SUNY being the main
9 providers in state facilities as TAP is
10 restored for incarcerated students?

11 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Jim, since
12 you've been dealing with the incarcerated
13 conversation. I think we're -- go ahead.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURPHY: Sure.

15 I mean, I think we have to be
16 sensitive to the fact that SUNY and CUNY can
17 provide that service in many parts of the
18 state, and may be interested in doing so.
19 But we also have a number of not-for-profit
20 institutions throughout upstate New York that
21 are also certainly very well suited to
22 providing those services in their regions and
23 in their locales.

24 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay. And I can

1 appreciate your response. I'm more concerned
2 about people in our state being employed and
3 carrying out the services.

4 So as long as it's within New York and
5 not going to another state and getting people
6 to come in -- huh-unh. I'm not in favor of
7 that right now.

8 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Absolutely.

9 SENATOR JACKSON: And my third
10 question is can you comment on your stance,
11 Commissioner, against the healthcare workers
12 licensure transfer from State Ed to the
13 Department of Health?

14 Did the Governor consult with you on
15 this proposal? And have you spoken with the
16 DOH about this proposal? And what funding
17 amount do you need to support your staff to
18 enhance licensed accreditation?

19 And I understand, based on your
20 budget, that you're short-staffed, you didn't
21 get the numbers that you wanted.

22 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: So no, there
23 was no -- we found out during a budget
24 briefing.

1 And -- but I do have to tell you,
2 subsequent to that my conversations with the
3 commissioner -- you know, the commissioner of
4 Health has been amazing. We have really been
5 sharing information and sharing our concerns
6 as to why we opposed the situation and the
7 staffing issue, and as well as the sweeps
8 that were taking place prior to that.

9 So Dr. Bassett and I have been in
10 extensive conversations.

11 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you. My time
12 is up.

13 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
14 Assemblywoman Hyndman.

15 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Thank you,
16 Chair Weinstein.

17 Commissioner Rosa, good to see you.

18 My question is of the -- you said you
19 would lose 42 positions from OP to go to the
20 Department of Health. How much revenue does
21 OP bring into SED? And how much revenue do
22 you stand to lose if these 42 positions go to
23 DOH, to Health Department supervision?

24 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Well, there

1 are more than 40 positions.

2 But I'm going to let Phyllis give you
3 the exact number and -- the 59, and then also
4 the issue of the 2.8 million sweep that will
5 also go over. Which, by the way, we've never
6 been able to keep that.

7 So in terms of time, Phyllis. And
8 then Sarah, if you want to add anything.

9 NYSED CFO MORRIS: So what the
10 Executive Budget proposes to do is eliminate
11 the \$2.8 million sweep that the commissioner
12 has referenced, and also raise the
13 appropriation and spending authority for OP
14 so that they can spend all of the revenue
15 that they bring in.

16 And then there's language that talks
17 about the ability for some portion of that
18 revenue and the appropriations and the staff
19 to be transferred. And it's unclear exactly
20 how much money would be transferred. It's
21 unclear how many staff would be transferred.

22 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: How much
23 revenue does that -- how much revenue does OP
24 bring in? That's what my -- my --

1 NYSED CFO MORRIS: So it's over -- I
2 can get you the exact number. It's over
3 \$50 million per year, and a portion of that
4 is already transferred to DOH for certain
5 functions. So this proposal would transfer
6 additional revenue over, presumably.

7 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: And we can
8 get you the specifics.

9 The other thing is that you -- that I
10 want you to -- I want everybody to know is
11 that we're already in -- we have embarked on
12 the modernization of OP, and there's been
13 investment in that. So it would be very
14 challenging to all of a sudden have this
15 modernization, and then what. You know,
16 we've made an investment already.

17 So let us make the investment, let's
18 work through what we need to work through,
19 rather than taking these -- you know, this
20 responsibility disposition over without any
21 full understanding of what are the positive
22 outcomes, potentially.

23 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Okay. Thank
24 you, Commissioner Rosa.

1 I just want to say thank you to the
2 staff that always responds to the inquiries,
3 Jennifer Trowbridge. Thank you very much.

4 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Thank you.

5 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: As my camera
6 drops.

7 (Laughter.)

8 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Were you done?

9 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Senator
10 Krueger.

11 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I hope we didn't
12 actually lose the Assemblywoman, just the
13 camera. Thank you. Oh, good, she's back.
14 She's alive. Good.

15 Thank you, Commissioner Rosa. I think
16 I'm the only Senator left right now. You
17 know, it's extraordinary that you keep coming
18 back here for different hearings and laying
19 out for us other things that your department
20 is supposed to be doing.

21 So I'm very torn between the
22 Governor's proposal to move the health
23 professionals to DOH or not to. I hear you.
24 I've been here. You were underfunded

1 forever, so you didn't have the staff to do
2 what you needed to do. I get that.

3 You've taken on more assignments for
4 yourselves since you became the commissioner
5 than I've seen SED ever try to do. So I
6 worry that you're, you know, spreading
7 yourselves too thin without adequate staff.

8 But I know that when I look at
9 questions about responsibilities for
10 physicians, physician's assistants, nurses
11 licensing, particularly when it comes to is
12 anybody tracking did they do anything wrong,
13 should they not be issued a license, should
14 they not be reissued a license, have they
15 been caught up in criminal activity, sexual
16 attack on their patients activity -- that
17 both of you have some responsibility, DOH and
18 SED, and people seem to fall between the
19 cracks.

20 And I'm just wondering, if this wasn't
21 really a question of your losing revenue and
22 staff, would you actually objectively oppose
23 having one agency that's responsible for the
24 qualifications, licensing and investigations

1 of healthcare workers?

2 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: I would
3 still -- Senator, I would still object.
4 Because I think when you think about the
5 department's authority and you think about
6 the responsibility of separating out quantity
7 and quality -- and as I said in my opening
8 remarks, to put it all under one umbrella
9 where you don't have the checks and
10 balances -- and to also, when we think about
11 the disciplinary issues that we do look at, I
12 do believe that there's a role for both of us
13 to play. But we have to maintain the
14 integrity of each other's work.

15 And the fact that we've been able to
16 do the kind of work we've been able to do
17 without the financial support -- I think
18 having the financial support I think will
19 clearly have an incredible outcome, I think,
20 for our profession and the field.

21 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: And again, from
22 the perspective of patient/consumer safety,
23 which is a serious one for me, you know, who
24 has that responsibility for the website that

1 keeps track of have you been charged with
2 anything? Are you currently being
3 investigated for anything? Have you, you
4 know, lost 10 medical malpractice suits?

5 Is that you or DOH or is there -- is
6 that a dual role and everything doesn't
7 always get done?

8 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Okay,
9 there -- to your question, I think that there
10 are different situations. When we get the
11 information about these charges, we obviously
12 work through with the Department of Health.
13 And I'm going to ask Sarah, because this is
14 one of these internal conversations that
15 we've been having about -- the public safety
16 is something that I would probably say is
17 non-negotiable.

18 But Sarah?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON:
20 Certainly. So by law the oversight of
21 physicians, physician's assistants, and
22 specialist assistants, who we license, their
23 disciplinary authority lies with the
24 Department of Health.

1 The other 52 professions that we
2 license we also have the oversight and
3 disciplinary authority.

4 Pursuant to law, if there is an
5 investigation or a complaint, that is
6 confidential. So to your question about who
7 posts information about a complaint, no one
8 does. It's only once there's a finding and
9 the Regents have taken a final action that
10 that information is posted on our website for
11 the professions that we discipline. The
12 Department of Health, likewise, posts
13 information about physicians.

14 There are also some ancillary
15 professions, not -- you know, what we would
16 consider unlicensed persons, but people who
17 may have certifications or other
18 qualifications through the Department of
19 Health, that they would also be responsible
20 for.

21 But we do work back and forth. For
22 example, if we have a finding of a nurse who
23 is guilty of misconduct because of
24 short-staffing or some other facility

1 consideration, our folks very closely reach
2 out to DOH and say, Hey, there may be a
3 problem with this nursing home or this
4 hospital because we're seeing, you know,
5 complaints come out of that location. And so
6 there is some back and forth there.

7 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay. Changing
8 topics, with your discussion about the
9 interstate compacts and whether this is a
10 dimin -- it would decrease our oversight over
11 these professions or whether it would expand
12 our ability to get more healthcare
13 professionals when we need them, tell me what
14 your opinion is when it comes to telehealth.

15 Because there's lots of discussion
16 about I think the potential for telehealth to
17 expand, getting providers to where patients
18 are, particularly, you know, upstate New York
19 and Western New York. But how does what we
20 do with these compacts impact what we are
21 able to do with telehealth?

22 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Sure. So
23 we'll start with the fact that we have seen
24 some benefits, obviously, to the telehealth

1 that we clearly -- but they -- you know,
2 again, they do not take -- you know, it's
3 almost -- the telehealth is helpful and the
4 telehealth has its place, but there's nothing
5 like in-person. Right? I think we all would
6 agree to that.

7 Having said that, I think this is one
8 that, again, internally we have been doing
9 some serious exploration.

10 Sarah?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON: Sure.

12 So telehealth is already permitted in
13 many -- many situations. The criteria,
14 though, is that you have to be licensed in
15 New York. So you can be anywhere as long as
16 you're licensed in New York.

17 Pursuant to executive orders, you
18 didn't have to be licensed in New York. I
19 think the question with how that intersects
20 with licensure compacts is an interesting and
21 somewhat complex answer in terms of more
22 people would be licensed in New York but
23 would they have any other nexus to New York?
24 Would they take business away from New York?

1 Would they charge less than a New York
2 practitioner would? There's a lot of
3 considerations that I think need to be
4 thought through carefully before deciding
5 that's the answer to something that is a
6 valuable resource and certain something that
7 may need to expand under the right
8 circumstances.

9 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you. Thank
10 you both.

11 See, I still am perplexed on both, but
12 at least now I know they were complicated
13 questions I was asking.

14 With that, I turn it back over to the
15 Assembly.

16 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So we have two
17 Assemblymembers. So we'll start first with
18 Assemblywoman Simon.

19 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Thank you,
20 Madam Chair.

21 And welcome, Commissioner, good to see
22 you again.

23 I have -- first of all, I just want to
24 say I agree with Assemblymember Epstein in

1 the questions he was asking and the issue
2 about testing. And one of the concerns I
3 have is what are we doing to address the fact
4 that a lot of the annual testing is federal.
5 And how do we deal with that, and how do we
6 advocate with the federal government for that
7 to -- for some fundamental change there? So
8 I'd like to know about that.

9 I also want to know when the last time
10 we modified the substance or the content of
11 the teacher licensing test. I know we went
12 through the whole edTPA thing, but it's not
13 clear to me whether it was just because of
14 the Common Core, you know, and how that is
15 working.

16 And then I just want to disagree on
17 the OATH thing because we do not have to deny
18 people and make people sue every year, and we
19 didn't have to not pay our impartial hearing
20 officers. In a lot of ways we could resolve
21 this besides what I believe to be an approach
22 that is illegal if not highly problematic.

23 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Okay, so
24 I'll start with the -- from the educational

1 perspective.

2 We have been in communications, as I
3 shared and I will share with you and others
4 that are interested, this whole conversation
5 that we're having about assessment and
6 accountability on both parts. And we still
7 continue to address not only the issue of our
8 participation in the assessment component,
9 but the implication that it has for
10 accountability.

11 So we've been really strongly, as you
12 know, speaking to our stakeholders, but also
13 speaking to the USDE about, specific to
14 New York State, what our concerns are about
15 the assessment.

16 And then so we can get that
17 information to you. I think that would be
18 the best way to address this, because it
19 is -- it's been ongoing. We spent seven
20 months just on accountability and how to --
21 you know, how do we help with this issue of
22 identification, as you all know.

23 On the OATH issue, we agree to
24 disagree. And I'd love to continue the

1 conversation with you privately to explain
2 how, by the way, it is making a difference in
3 the backlog. It's already showing a
4 decrease. But again, you know, we will be
5 more than glad to share that information with
6 you.

7 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: What about the
8 edTPA or the content of the teacher test?

9 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Sure. Sure.
10 The edTPA -- and I'm going to have
11 Jim -- but we've done some amazing things
12 with the edTPA because we've had
13 conversations with the higher ed, we've had
14 conversations about how to fold in the edTPA
15 information into our design of higher ed
16 programs.

17 And Jim, do you want to just
18 quickly --

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURPHY: Very
20 briefly; I know the time is ticking.

21 We have embarked upon a review of the
22 teacher certification requirements. We have
23 already modified them. We recognize that we
24 have made it too complicated and too

1 expensive to become a teacher. And we are
2 committed to moving that review forward.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

4 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Thank you.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: I do not
6 believe there are any other Senators, so
7 we'll go to Assemblywoman Griffin for three
8 minutes.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: Okay, thank
10 you very much.

11 And thank you, Commissioner Rosa, for
12 being here with us today.

13 I had a question. In your testimony
14 you describe that we need much more services
15 for students with disabilities, and I
16 completely agree. And I just wondered if you
17 could briefly describe what services you
18 would make available if you were -- if you
19 got that much more funding for this group of
20 individuals.

21 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Sure. So
22 you know that, for example, students with
23 disabilities, I think particularly in -- you
24 know, when we think about New York State

1 colleges and universities, we have
2 approximately somewhere about 80,000
3 students. And when we think about a budget
4 of 2 million to support these students, it
5 comes out to something like \$27 per student.

6 And we -- you and I know that this is
7 really a population that needs a tremendous
8 amount of support in order for them to be
9 successful. They need all kinds of
10 modifications, and they need -- a higher ed
11 institution needs to have built-in support
12 systems for our students with different
13 disabilities to really -- to really, truly
14 advance.

15 And so, you know, we really support
16 the opportunity of also -- when we looked at
17 the request we made through the Board of
18 Regents of 50 million -- you know, when you
19 get 2 million, you're somewhat -- you're
20 okay, but you're disappointed. And we just
21 really truly believe that enhancing
22 supporting services for our students with
23 disabilities is essential.

24 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: Yeah, I

1 completely agree.

2 And another question I have is in
3 regards to canceled programs where, you know,
4 the Governor's proposal is there's a refund
5 provided. But it seems like a little
6 precarious because I know different students
7 have been at a school and they -- sometimes
8 arbitrarily a program gets canceled and
9 people might have been there, might be
10 planning to go there.

11 So what do you suggest -- what should
12 be happening in this situation with
13 programs -- like how should that work?

14 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Well, our
15 concern is that -- as we indicated, and I
16 know Jim spoke to this issue -- to have a
17 program approval that, you know, 45 days into
18 it that -- when in fact it's going to affect
19 students. Why not, you know, look to make
20 sure that these are programs that we don't
21 have to even be involved in refunding
22 students?

23 But also not -- you know, it's the
24 time that they spent.

1 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: Right.

2 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: So it's not
3 just the financial refund, it's also very
4 frustrating for students to have to go
5 through this period of time and then find out
6 that the program is not approved.

7 That, to me, is not a good use of what
8 we would consider students' time as well as
9 financial.

10 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: Okay, thank
11 you very much. Appreciate it. Thank you.

12 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

13 Thank you, Commissioner Rosa, for
14 being with us again this -- again today.
15 There are no further questions from either
16 the Assembly or Senate, so -- and we thank
17 you.

18 Oh -- yes. I got nervous, Liz, when
19 you waved.

20 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: No, I'm so sorry,
21 I just was going back on camera to wave.
22 Thank you very much.

23 NYSED COMMISSIONER ROSA: Thank you.

24 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So thank you.

1 So now we're going to go to our final
2 government witness, our former colleague,
3 Dr. Guillermo Linares, from HESC, New York
4 State Higher Education Services Corporation.
5 Guillermo is the president.

6 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Good
7 afternoon, Chairs Krueger, Weinstein,
8 Stavisky and Glick, and all my former
9 colleagues in the Senate and Assembly. Thank
10 you for the opportunity to speak today about
11 the Governor's 2022-2023 Executive Budget
12 recommendations that impact the New York
13 State Higher Education Services Corporation,
14 HESC.

15 I'm Dr. Guillermo Linares, president
16 of HESC.

17 In 2020-2021, New York State's higher
18 education institutions educated nearly
19 1.2 million students, nearly one quarter --
20 or approximately 300,000 -- of whom received
21 HESC-administered state financial aid.

22 The 2022-2023 Executive Budget
23 recommendations reflect Governor Hochul's
24 strong commitment and support for higher

1 education programs and offer a comprehensive
2 plan that will both continue to make higher
3 education in our state more affordable and
4 accessible and help two-thirds of New Yorkers
5 earn a post-secondary credential by 2030.

6 Building on the more than two dozen
7 financial aid and college access programs
8 that in 2020-2021 provided more than
9 \$900 million to support the higher education
10 costs of approximately 300,000 New Yorkers,
11 the 2022-2023 Executive Budget proposes to
12 expand TAP eligibility for students enrolled
13 in college part-time, authorize the use of
14 TAP for workforce credential programs, and
15 removes financial aid barriers to once again
16 allow incarcerated individuals to get
17 critical job skills.

18 Expanding access to part-time TAP.
19 The Executive Budget includes \$150 million to
20 expand TAP to students enrolled in six or
21 more credits at a SUNY, CUNY or
22 not-for-profit college located in New York
23 State. The Executive recommendations remove
24 the requirement for a year of prior full-time

1 study, which currently makes the program
2 largely unavailable to students studying
3 part-time, allowing the state to annually
4 support 75,000 additional New York State
5 students in their pursuit of a college
6 degree.

7 Expanding TAP for high-demand
8 workforce credential programs.
9 Post-secondary education is crucial for
10 economic success, with 70 percent of new jobs
11 requiring some post-secondary credential.
12 But roughly 2.4 million New Yorkers between
13 ages 25 and 44 lack a post-secondary degree
14 or credential, putting them at risk of being
15 left behind as the job market continues to
16 trend towards more skilled hires.

17 To make the state more responsive to
18 these post-secondary workforce needs, the
19 budget further expands part-time TAP to cover
20 students enrolled in non-degree workforce
21 credential programs in high-demand fields at
22 CUNY and SUNY community colleges.

23 To ensure the program focuses on the
24 highest-growth areas, Empire State

1 Development and the state's Regional Economic
2 Development Councils will recommend which
3 courses of sequence would be eligible for
4 state funding, based on an analysis of
5 regional industry trends, workforce needs,
6 and existing program offerings.

7 Moving on to restoring the Tuition
8 Assistance Program, TAP, for incarcerated
9 individuals.

10 Since 1995, New York State law has
11 prohibited incarcerated people from being
12 eligible to receive state financial aid. The
13 2023 Executive Budget proposes to reverse
14 this ban and expand educational opportunities
15 within correctional facilities and help
16 incarcerated individuals get critical job
17 skills. This legislation repeals the
18 prohibition against awarding TAP to otherwise
19 eligible incarcerated individuals.

20 In conclusion, Governor Hochul has
21 proposed a whole new era for New York, one in
22 which we work together to ensure that
23 New Yorkers have both access to a college
24 education and an understanding of their

1 financial aid options to support their
2 pursuit and attainment of a post-secondary
3 degree or non-degree credentialing.

4 Under the Governor's leadership,
5 New York continues to lead the nation in
6 expanding access to a quality and affordable
7 college education. The Executive Budget
8 includes a \$619 million increase, or
9 8.3 percent, in funding for higher education.

10 The Governor's recommendations for
11 higher education continue to fund programs
12 that enable the neediest of New York's
13 students to pursue their educational goals
14 regardless of financial situation. HESC is
15 pleased to be an integral player in helping
16 New York's students attain the economic and
17 social benefits that accompany a college
18 degree or non-degree credentials in
19 high-demand fields.

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

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes, so we go
23 to -- thank you, Guillermo. We go to our
24 Higher Ed chair, Deborah Glick, for

1 10 minutes.

2 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very
3 much for being here. It's always a pleasure
4 to see you.

5 Can you inform us of how many students
6 have been assisted by the DREAM Act?

7 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: I can provide
8 you the exact number.

9 But we have been highly successful in
10 ensuring that all of the students that have
11 applied for the program, and qualify, have
12 been admitted and have -- are benefiting
13 currently from all our offerings, including
14 TAP, the Excelsior Scholarship, and other
15 scholarship programs that we have.

16 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you. So
17 we'll get that number from you.

18 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Yes.

19 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: And when you say
20 who have applied and who have been
21 successful, what is the outreach that the
22 department does in order to ensure that
23 everyone eligible knows that they have that
24 option?

1 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Well, we work
2 closely with both CUNY and SUNY, but we also
3 rely, from the very beginning and inception
4 of the program, on a vast network of
5 nonprofit institutions that work closely with
6 Dreamers -- because they are trusted, they
7 were part of the effort to make the
8 legislation a reality, and they have been
9 instrumental in rolling out and the success
10 that we've had with the DREAM Act
11 implementation.

12 So we rely on them, but we also work
13 closely with the department -- all the high
14 schools, BOCES and superintendents throughout
15 the state to ensure that where students may
16 be out of status, they know that they have an
17 opportunity to enter college and apply for
18 financial aid through the DREAM Act.

19 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: How will the
20 department structure and administer part-time
21 TAP? I know you said that it removes the
22 one-year requirement, but if I read it
23 correctly, you have to be taking at least six
24 credits and no more than 12.

1 So how will -- and what is the --
2 perhaps your staff at some point could tell
3 us what that would look like in terms of how
4 much support a student would receive if they
5 are in part-time status.

6 So I don't know that you have a --
7 usually there is sort of a chart of how much
8 somebody is eligible for based on their
9 family income and whether they're the only
10 ones in their family going to school.

11 So how are you going to structure that
12 and administer it?

13 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Well, we'd be
14 happy to follow up with you on some of the
15 specifics.

16 But I can explain to you how excited
17 we are that the Governor has proposed adding
18 75,000 new students to have access to
19 part-time TAP. So this is welcome news, and
20 we look forward to working with the key
21 stakeholders, both CUNY, SUNY and the
22 for-profit private institutions, to really
23 engage on this effort, as we also intend to
24 do with the State Department of Education.

1 But we are excited, and we believe
2 that this will go a long way in, you know,
3 giving access to students that otherwise
4 could not have access to an education
5 because, you know, they have this impediment
6 with full-time -- one-year full-time. We are
7 excited about this, and we're looking forward
8 to having a successful rollout.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Once the budget
10 is passed, assuming that this is included, of
11 course, how long will it take the department
12 to develop regulations or procedures?

13 Do you anticipate being ready,
14 assuming an April 1st deadline for the
15 budget? Will you be ready -- when will you
16 be ready to take actual applications and
17 review them? Will it be for the fall
18 semester? Will it be available for summer?

19 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Well, I think
20 we have some experience rolling out
21 initiatives such as this one, even though
22 this is quite a significant one.

23 But, you know, I took this position
24 when we rolled out Excelsior, and we were

1 able to really get to the finish line in
2 terms of crafting the regs and also making
3 sure that we are prepared to reach out to all
4 those who will be interested.

5 And I think that we will be ready and
6 able to do that looking at the fall semester,
7 from past experiences, I can say. But again,
8 we will be diligent in making sure that we
9 make this available as quickly as possible
10 once the budget is approved.

11 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: I'm of course
12 among those that's very happy that the
13 Governor has included TAP for the
14 incarcerated individuals, which of course we
15 had prior to the Pataki administration.

16 So -- but obviously these are
17 individuals who are in our prison system, and
18 so is that going to be -- how is that going
19 to be administered? Obviously these are not
20 individuals who have a particular income.
21 And is this something that you will be
22 working with individual colleges and they
23 will be directing students to you? Or what
24 do you envision being the process that

1 incarcerated individuals who are interested
2 in availing themselves of this benefit -- how
3 will that proceed?

4 I believe it's important so we have
5 less recidivism, that people who are ready to
6 reenter society do so with some education
7 behind them. We have had private colleges
8 that have raised money in order to do this,
9 and their success rate, in terms of once
10 individuals have left the prisons, there is a
11 great track record.

12 But it does seem to me that it's a
13 little more complicated than people applying
14 to you. So I'm wondering what conversations
15 you've had about how to administer it.

16 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Well, thank
17 you for your remarks. I share your, you
18 know, enthusiasm in terms of the program.
19 And I believe that this will be on the
20 positive side of the equation in terms of our
21 mission.

22 The implementation of the program will
23 be handled administratively by DOCCS, the
24 Department of Corrections. And we have

1 cleared the way for awards to be made within
2 Education Law moving forward. And we will
3 coordinate with DOCCS and others that will be
4 involved in the process, partnering in the
5 process of identifying the institutions that
6 will be serving this population.

7 Clearly we have, you know, efforts
8 within CUNY and SUNY and with other in-state
9 institutions that have experience on this.
10 But this is quite exciting to see that we're
11 going to be able to do, by this population,
12 giving them access to higher education.

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thanks very
14 much. One last question.

15 You administer a lot of different
16 scholarship programs; some of them perhaps
17 did not get increases. But there's one that
18 is administered through the Department of
19 Health, Doctors Across New York. And I'm
20 wondering why that is in DOH, where all of
21 the other things that provide educational
22 resources to students seeking to improve
23 themselves, why Doctors Across New York is at
24 DOH, that has no particular experience with

1 scholarship programs.

2 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: It's
3 something that we'd be willing to look into.
4 But we do have programs, as we discussed in
5 previous hearings and with you directly, to
6 really help address the health needs of
7 New Yorkers.

8 So that's something that we can look
9 into and further discuss with you.

10 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Well, thank you
11 very much. And I have already requested that
12 additional dollars go into the Pat McGee
13 Nurse Educator Scholarship. It seems odd
14 that we are not providing more resources
15 there.

16 Thank you very much.

17 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Much
18 appreciated.

19 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: To the Senate.

20 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

21 Toby Stavisky.

22 SENATOR STAVISKY: Dr. Linares, good
23 to see you again.

24 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Same here.

1 Same here.

2 SENATOR STAVISKY: Welcome home.

3 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Thank you.

4 SENATOR STAVISKY: Let me ask you
5 about a couple of the programs that HESC
6 administers, and that's the Excelsior, the
7 DREAM Act, and the Enhanced TAP awards.

8 In terms of the Excelsior, because
9 that seems to be on people's minds, what's
10 been happening? In other words, how many
11 students are applying? Have you found that
12 students are defaulting? Would you discuss
13 it in terms of whether students are meeting
14 the four-year requirement, the 30-credit
15 requirement, how that has impacted the
16 numbers?

17 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Sure. Let me
18 give you a quick overview.

19 Currently we have 31,000 to 32,000
20 students that receive the scholarship --

21 SENATOR STAVISKY: Can you break that
22 down by public and private? I'm sorry, it
23 doesn't apply.

24 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: It's

1 Excelsior, for CUNY and SUNY.

2 SENATOR STAVISKY: For CUNY and SUNY,
3 right.

4 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Yeah. So
5 with that, you know, current number, if we
6 look at the past several years we see that an
7 average of approximately 45,000 students
8 apply every year. This is on an annual
9 basis. And of those who apply, about
10 50 percent of them are eligible, found
11 eligible to receive awards.

12 This is similar to how we experience
13 the process for TAP. So overall I say this
14 is looking very well. I think we've seen a
15 lot of positive outcomes with students
16 participating in the program. I think that a
17 key element with Excelsior is an emphasis in
18 getting students to complete their degree on
19 time so that they can save money and not have
20 to borrow, and at the same time be able to
21 enter the workforce in a timely basis. So
22 that's a driver.

23 And also the fact that so many
24 families that would otherwise have to pay out

1 of pocket to cover tuition now have this
2 program to allow them to help pay, you know,
3 their students' -- or their kids' college
4 education through tuition.

5 So overall I say we see success in
6 terms of completing on time, we see success
7 in terms of the students that are able to
8 carry the 30 credits, given the 365 years --
9 days that we give throughout the year for a
10 student to be able to complement credit
11 deficiencies they may have. They can take
12 spring or summer -- winter or summer breaks
13 to be able to take those classes.

14 SENATOR STAVISKY: In terms of
15 enhanced TAP for the independent colleges,
16 how many colleges have agreed to accept the
17 ETA awards? And are they providing the
18 requirement matching funds? And how many
19 students are using the ETA?

20 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Yeah, thank
21 you for the question.

22 In the last three years we've seen a
23 reduction in terms of the number of
24 participating colleges. We have gone from

1 40 participating colleges down to less than
2 25 colleges. That is the current number that
3 we have. And when you have a smaller number
4 of colleges participating, a smaller number
5 of applicants, students, will participate.
6 And therefore you have even a smaller number
7 of students that are also receiving the
8 award.

9 But looking specifically at the
10 numbers now, as they are, according to the
11 2020-2021, there was just 2,600 students
12 receiving awards, totaling 4.6 million that
13 is matched by the participating colleges. So
14 the number has reduced primarily because of
15 the number of participating colleges.

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: And how would you
17 remedy that decline? Or would you suggest
18 that it's not cost-effective?

19 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Well, we --
20 there was a lot of enthusiasm in the
21 beginning. I think -- part of what I think
22 is the biggest challenge for participating
23 institutions is the fact that they have to
24 come up with a match --

1 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yeah.

2 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: -- that they
3 have to put up to the funding that we
4 provide. And that is something challenging
5 for some colleges, making it difficult.

6 If they didn't have the match, I think
7 that we could see a change in terms of growth
8 in the number of colleges participating.

9 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yeah, some of the
10 colleges are in danger of closing. I know
11 that.

12 Let me ask you, in the remaining
13 time -- the DREAM Act. How many -- what are
14 the numbers there, and where are they coming
15 from? And whatever you can tell us about the
16 Dreamers, the students -- the undocumented.

17 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Well, the
18 DREAM Act implementation has been a
19 resounding success.

20 I said to Assemblywoman Glick that I
21 would get back to her with the specific
22 numbers that we have. But I can tell that
23 every single student that has come and
24 applied and has qualified to receive the

1 support of all of the programs that we have
2 available for them, have received state aid
3 through the DREAM Act, thanks to the efforts
4 that we have in collaboration with CUNY,
5 SUNY, and also the private institutions,
6 higher ed institutions that we have.

7 And again, I highlight the close
8 collaboration that we have -- which is
9 ongoing, by the way -- with a vast network
10 across the state of nonprofit institutions
11 that serve immigrant populations and work
12 very closely with Dreamers.

13 And by the way, we work very closely
14 with the Dreamers themselves.

15 SENATOR STAVISKY: Good.

16 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: It is a
17 resounding success.

18 SENATOR STAVISKY: That to me is very
19 important, coming from Queens County -- or
20 representing a district in Queens County.

21 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Yes.

22 SENATOR STAVISKY: Lastly, the
23 Executive Budget holds harmless various --
24 some of the Excelsior financial programs.

1 How has -- have you found that the students
2 are receiving what they're entitled to
3 receive? Did you need -- did you have to
4 create new proposals and so forth?

5 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: No, we were
6 fortunate to have the flexibility necessary
7 for us to be able to hold harmless students,
8 particularly in the spring and fall of 2020
9 when so many students were impacted, the
10 flexibility that the federal government and
11 the state government, Department of
12 Education, both levels, provided was
13 instrumental in making sure that the vast
14 majority of students were able to complete
15 both terms and they were held harmless.

16 And on top of that, the budget now
17 includes another layer of support to make
18 sure that any student that may have been
19 impacted by the -- by COVID-19 would not lose
20 eligibility of the awards that they're
21 entitled to. So we're in a good place in
22 terms of the impact of the pandemic.

23 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

24 And with all due respect, the students

1 are in a better place.

2 (Laughter.)

3 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Yes.

4 SENATOR STAVISKY: Okay, thank you
5 very much.

6 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Thank you.

7 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay. Assembly?

8 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
9 Assemblyman Ra, our ranker, Ways and Means,
10 for five minutes.

11 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Good afternoon.
12 Always good to see our former colleague here.

13 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Same here.

14 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: I wanted to ask a
15 question about a program that I've asked you
16 about I think the last couple of years, the
17 Child Welfare Workers Incentive Scholarship
18 and the Child Welfare Worker Loan Forgiveness
19 program.

20 I know last year you were able to tell
21 me that they were fully subscribed. It is a
22 relatively small program. It's something
23 that I would like to see expanded. So would
24 you be able to tell me if it is fully being

1 utilized this year?

2 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: It is. I
3 mean, every single penny allocated for it is
4 being utilized to -- according to my
5 information. And I tell you that the
6 challenge we have is we would love to expand,
7 if we can, in the context of what's ahead.
8 And I think that this will be welcome news.

9 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Okay. And if you
10 could follow up, and if you have any
11 information just regarding numbers in terms
12 of how many people are applying for the
13 program that might assist us in the
14 Legislature that want to, you know, push for
15 additional funding so that more people could
16 take advantage, since we know there is
17 absolutely a need to get people into this
18 field.

19 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Absolutely.
20 I'd be glad to follow up with you.

21 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Okay, thank you.

22 The other issue I just wanted to
23 mention is another -- well, a newer program,
24 and I know -- I think the window to apply

1 just closed over the weekend -- but this
2 Nurses for Our Future scholarship.

3 I'm just wondering how the
4 applications are going to be evaluated,
5 whether it's -- you know, is it income-based,
6 is it performance-based, is there some other
7 way that they're going to be evaluated? And
8 specifically, do we know how much funding is
9 being allocated to this initiative?

10 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Well, the
11 initiative has been a success. We have
12 received about 7,000 applications,
13 approximately 7,000 applications.

14 And as soon as we proceed and have the
15 process in place, we will be announcing the
16 winners -- you know, it's a thousand of
17 them -- via a lottery.

18 So we're excited about the initiative.
19 You know, 750 of those applicants, once
20 they're selected, they will receive a
21 scholarship to get a Bachelor of Science in
22 nursing, and 250 of them will receive
23 scholarships to get an associate's degree in
24 nursing. So we're excited about that.

1 You know, in terms of what the budget
2 will be, I think that that's something that
3 we can follow up with you.

4 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Thank you.

5 Thank you, Chairs.

6 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Thank you.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Back to the
8 Senate.

9 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

10 I believe we're up to Senator Robert
11 Jackson.

12 SENATOR JACKSON: Dr. Guillermo
13 Linares, my long-time friend. How's your
14 family doing? I hope they're doing well.

15 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: They're doing
16 well, and I hope yours as well.

17 SENATOR JACKSON: Very well, thank
18 you.

19 I've just got a couple of quick
20 questions. Do you have an opinion on UUP,
21 United University Professions, and PSC,
22 Professional Staff Congress, requesting about
23 \$253 million each in operating aid to support
24 students, educators and their institutions

1 get to where they were and where they need to
2 be. Basically they've been cut, cut, cut,
3 and now, instead of being cut, they're being
4 increased in the budget, but not enough for
5 them to bring back to where it was.

6 So they're requesting about
7 \$253 million each, for a little bit more than
8 a half a billion dollars, understanding that
9 our Governor had said that she's proposing a
10 budget surplus to put into reserves of about
11 \$15 billion.

12 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Well, I
13 appreciate the question, Senator. I -- you
14 know, you and I go back a long, long way to
15 the school board days and many other steps
16 beyond that. And I know your passion for
17 education, especially funding.

18 I believe, you know, looking at the
19 times I was in the Assembly to recent years
20 when I've been in this role, there's been
21 always a struggle to try to increase the
22 funding needs in higher education -- in K-12
23 as well, but higher education in this
24 particular case.

1 You know, I'm gratified to see that
2 notwithstanding all of the challenges we've
3 seen in the last two years, that Governor
4 Hochul is committing such a strong effort to
5 increase funding to new levels to help us
6 move in the right direction. The needs are
7 great, but I think that this is a very firm
8 step in getting us to address critical needs
9 that we have. And I'm glad to be part of
10 that effort.

11 I know that it's not going to get us
12 where we want to be, but we can build from
13 what this budget has presented under the
14 Governor. And I -- you know, I'm excited
15 about that.

16 SENATOR JACKSON: I'm sorry, I only
17 have 38 seconds. I've got two quick
18 questions.

19 How much money does the higher
20 education program that you work in award to
21 private-institution students yearly, if you
22 know? And if you don't know, my team will be
23 following up. And how much is awarded to
24 public-school-institution students?

1 So that's the questions that I'm going
2 to ask -- not to respond on that, but my
3 staff will follow up.

4 But do you think that extending TAP
5 for five years, restoring eligibility to
6 graduate students, and/or allowing optional
7 semesters, quarters, in determining
8 eligibility for awards will result in
9 enhanced student achievement, as you stated
10 for part-time and incarcerated students of
11 TAP programs?

12 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: I think any
13 initiative that enhances the opportunity for
14 students to get back into higher education,
15 particularly at this time, is welcome and
16 exciting, for New York State will benefit all
17 around because of those initiatives.

18 SENATOR JACKSON: Well, thank you. My
19 time is up, sir.

20 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

21 I believe the last questioner will be
22 Assemblywoman Hyndman.

23 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Thank you,
24 Chair Glick.

1 something that I, you know, would not comment
2 on at this point because it's been decided
3 that it is those three sectors, CUNY, SUNY
4 and -- and the for-profit colleges is
5 something that would have to be brought in
6 the context of the discussions moving forward
7 within the budget.

8 We work with all of the directives
9 that come from the process that involves the
10 Governor and the Legislature, and we simply
11 implement. We would welcome any effort to
12 work closely with any of our partners. And
13 that includes the for-profit colleges that
14 provide services to our students.

15 ASSEMBLYWOMAN HYNDMAN: Right.
16 because you audit institutions of higher
17 education that receive state funding. And if
18 you found discrepancies or inaccuracies, they
19 would be required to make payment, or
20 sometimes if they can't do that, they close.
21 And sometimes there are prosecutions. So I
22 know the scope of your work, I just thought
23 you may have some insight into that.

24 Thank you. It's always good to see

1 you. Thank you.

2 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Sure.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

4 Senator Krueger, you have --

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Hello, nice to
6 see you, Guillermo.

7 I don't think we have any other
8 Senators asking questions.

9 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Okay. Thank
10 you for being here.

11 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Thank you
12 very much.

13 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

14 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

15 HESC PRESIDENT LINARES: Thanks for
16 the opportunity.

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We're going to
18 be moving on now, just to remind members, to
19 the public witness portion of the hearing,
20 and we have it -- the rest of the hearing is
21 arranged in several panels -- actually, four
22 panels we have today, which will have a
23 number of people in each panel.

24 Each panelist will have three minutes

1 to present their testimony. We already have
2 the testimony circulated to members, so you
3 don't have to read it exactly. And then any
4 members who wish to ask a question of the
5 panel will have three minutes to ask both the
6 question and to be able to get the answer.
7 Because we really want to hear from the
8 panelists who are here and make sure we still
9 can pay attention when we get to the last
10 presenter in the panel.

11 So -- and you'll see the panels are
12 sort of grouped by subject matter.

13 So we start off with Professional
14 Staff Congress of CUNY, James Davis,
15 president; UUP, United University
16 Professions, Dr. Frederick Kowal, president;
17 NYSUT, New York State United Teachers, Andrew
18 Sako, president of the Faculty Federation of
19 Erie Community College; and University Police
20 Officers, Christopher Lacosse, director.

21 So let's start with PSC.

22 DR. DAVIS: Thank you.

23 Good afternoon, Senate Chairpersons
24 Krueger and Stavisky, Assembly Chairpersons

1 Weinstein and Glick, and committee members.
2 It's good to see you. Thank you for the
3 opportunity to testify today, and for your
4 stamina today and your support, as always,
5 for public higher education.

6 The PSC comes before the committee
7 this year in a different situation than last
8 year. We're entering year three of a
9 pandemic that continues to impact CUNY -- our
10 students have been among the most hardest hit
11 by COVID. The communities in which many of
12 them live were disproportionately affected.
13 And CUNY's faculty and staff have worked
14 tirelessly, as you know, to keep the
15 university running.

16 We do have ongoing health and safety
17 concerns, and course cancellations have
18 impeded student progress in too many cases
19 and left adjunct faculty without income and
20 in some cases without health insurance. But
21 we appreciate you standing by our side during
22 this difficult time.

23 To reverse the current enrollment
24 trends at CUNY and to continue providing

1 high-quality education, we must offer
2 students the support they need and they
3 deserve in traumatic times. And as you know,
4 our students have a distinctive profile:
5 Half of CUNY students come from households
6 with annual incomes below \$30,000; 80 percent
7 of our students are people of color;
8 44 percent are the first generation in their
9 families to attend college; 13 percent are
10 supporting children; and 35 percent are
11 foreign-born.

12 So an investment in CUNY is a matter
13 of racial and economic justice, but
14 investment in CUNY is also -- clearly pays
15 clear dividends for the state. Nearly
16 80 percent of CUNY grads stay in New York.
17 CUNY graduates working in New York State in
18 2019 earned, in the aggregate, \$28.6 billion
19 more than they would have without a
20 postsecondary degree. And CUNY graduates
21 working in New York State in 2019 paid an
22 estimated \$4.2 billion in state income taxes.

23 Last year the Brookings Institution
24 ranked 12 CUNY colleges among the most

1 successful in the country at propelling
2 students into the middle class.

3 Now we're very pleased that
4 Governor Hochul has taken public higher
5 education seriously in her Executive Budget.
6 Her approach to enhancing CUNY's academic
7 program without raising tuition is a welcome
8 departure, and the efforts that you all have
9 made to close the TAP gap, for example, and
10 to stabilize community college funding are
11 also reflected in Governor Hochul's
12 proposals.

13 And so those commitments are
14 essential, and we applaud them. However, we
15 believe that this is the year not only to
16 fund public higher education, but to make it
17 a key legislative priority. So PSC is asking
18 the Legislature this year to pass the
19 New Deal for CUNY and urging you to enact a
20 final budget that will begin to support the
21 New Deal in fiscal 2023.

22 New Deal for CUNY is a five-year,
23 \$1.7 billion framework for reversing decades
24 of underinvestment in CUNY. It will

1 establish robust staffing ratios,
2 65 full-time faculty per 1,000 full-time-
3 equivalent students, one academic adviser for
4 250 full-time-equivalent students, one mental
5 health counselor for 1,000
6 full-time-equivalent students, and it will
7 create pay parity for adjunct faculty and
8 rebuild CUNY's aging infrastructure.

9 And I see I have already exhausted my
10 time.

11 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: I was about to
12 ask if you could just, you know, complete --

13 DR. DAVIS: I will. I'm going to cut
14 directly to the chase.

15 We do feel this year is a unique
16 opportunity to make these major investments
17 in CUNY. There's been a dramatic decline in
18 funding since the recession in 2008 -- in the
19 senior college operating aid, 18 percent
20 alone. We have a deeply committed faculty,
21 and we have a student body that is driven to
22 succeed whatever the obstacles.

23 So thank you again for the opportunity
24 to speak with you today. Appreciative of the

1 Governor's plan, which is a springboard, we
2 feel, to do even more and to seize the
3 political moment.

4 Thank you, and look forward to your
5 questions.

6 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

7 Now we go to UUP.

8 DR. KOWAL: Chairperson Krueger,
9 Chairperson Weinstein, distinguished members
10 of the Senate Finance Committee and Assembly
11 Ways and Means Committee, and the Senate and
12 Assembly Higher Ed Committee. My name
13 is Dr. Fred Kowal, and on behalf of the
14 37,000 members of United University
15 Professions, I thank you for the opportunity
16 to testify today.

17 I would also like to thank you for
18 your commitment to a fairer and more just
19 New York. I applaud your tireless efforts
20 and steadfast support on behalf of our
21 students and our patients.

22 The 2022-'23 Executive Budget is a
23 step in the right direction to bolster the
24 SUNY system as a cornerstone of New York's

1 communities. Eliminating the TAP gap,
2 increasing funding for opportunity programs,
3 and committing to the hiring of full-time
4 faculty and staff are steps in the right
5 direction. After 15 years of austerity
6 budgeting, such steps are long overdue.

7 However, the resources SUNY campuses
8 need means that these steps fall short of
9 what is necessary. The simple fact is that
10 if funding for SUNY had been maintained where
11 it was in 2007, accounting for inflation,
12 SUNY would have \$7 billion more for the
13 teaching, research, and patient care that our
14 state desperately needs.

15 It is a fact that with 15 years of
16 underfunding, enrollment is down. That is
17 what happens when there aren't enough
18 resources provided to educate and guide
19 students through their college careers.
20 Without funding, students aren't attracted to
21 campuses. They perceive that the costs they
22 must pay are too high and, if they do attend,
23 they far too often drop out before completing
24 their degrees.

1 In my written testimony I detail how
2 the decade and a half of underfunding can and
3 must be undone. We know we can't get all
4 \$7 billion, but what we do expect is the
5 funding needed for operating costs that
6 campuses face. Consider it a down payment on
7 the \$7 billion.

8 More importantly, it's a down payment
9 on economic opportunity and social and racial
10 justice. Without the over \$100 million SUNY
11 campuses desperately need right now, the
12 income and wealth gap that worsens daily in
13 our state and nation will be exacerbated.

14 Worst of all, the Executive Budget
15 remains silent regarding the SUNY public
16 teaching hospitals. None of us can allow
17 another year to go by, another year of a
18 global pandemic, and have New York State not
19 fund these incredibly important institutions.
20 The work that has gone on there has kept all
21 of us safe from COVID.

22 UUP members have carried the burdens
23 of care while also training the next
24 generation of health care professionals. The

1 financial burdens these hospitals have borne
2 over the past 15 years of budget cuts are
3 mind-blowing, and COVID has brought them to
4 the brink of ruin.

5 SUNY Downstate, which Governor Cuomo
6 declared to be a COVID-only hospital, has
7 lost over \$150 million due to their inability
8 to treat other patients, provide other
9 services, and maintain their full presence in
10 Central Brooklyn. Without funding
11 immediately, Downstate will face a financial
12 cliff as early as June.

13 SUNY'S other teaching hospitals are
14 also stretched to the limit. If we as a
15 state truly want to face the healthcare
16 staffing crisis in our state, and if we
17 really want to ensure all New Yorkers have
18 access to the highest quality health care,
19 the state budget must respond to these
20 challenges.

21 We're in a pandemic. The needs are
22 desperate. If not now, when? We have the
23 resources, we have an obligation to each
24 other and our common future. I urge you to

1 take up the challenge of rebuilding our
2 SUNY system and make it viable for the
3 21st century.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

6 We now go to NYSUT. There you go,
7 Andrew.

8 MR. SAKO: Oh. Good afternoon
9 Chairperson Krueger, Chairperson Weinstein,
10 and honorable members of the Legislature and
11 distinguished staff.

12 I'm Andrew Sako, president of the
13 Faculty Federation of Erie Community College.
14 I want to thank you for the opportunity to
15 testify today on the proposed Executive
16 Budget for higher education. I'd like to
17 also thank you for your ongoing commitment to
18 community colleges.

19 Last year's budget contained a funding
20 floor of 98 percent, which gave community
21 colleges an additional \$4.4 million. That
22 was really a lifeline. I can't think of what
23 could have happened here at Erie Community
24 College had we not had that.

1 However, due to both COVID and
2 changing demographics, community colleges saw
3 a decrease in funding due to mostly lost
4 enrollment. Most community colleges lost
5 well over 20 percent due to both COVID and
6 fears of COVID. This has created the perfect
7 storm for community college funding.

8 For nearly 50 years, the state has not
9 fulfilled its statutory obligation to provide
10 community colleges the 40 percent in the
11 statute. To make matters worse, despite
12 declining enrollments, our funding continues
13 to be based on a totally inadequate
14 full-time-equivalent funding model which does
15 not insulate campuses from enrollment
16 fluctuations like we've experienced in the
17 past year.

18 Faced with declining and uncertain
19 enrollments, community colleges are forced to
20 either raise tuition or cut programs. This
21 is not -- this will not help us to attract
22 students or continue our mission to be
23 economic engines for our region.

24 This year's Executive Budget proposal

1 for community colleges contains 100 percent
2 of what we received in the 2021-2022 year.
3 While we are grateful for this support, it
4 does not resolve our issues. By giving us
5 100 percent of the amount received in our
6 worst year, the problem is only going to get
7 worse. We need to really think about other
8 ways.

9 We are asking you to consider
10 allocating 100 percent of the 2018-'19
11 pre-COVID year, which would provide SUNY
12 community colleges with an additional
13 \$37.5 million. This would help us guarantee
14 that our institutions will be recognizable
15 and open for business to meet the needs of
16 our students.

17 And that is the most important thing:
18 Meeting the needs of these students. We
19 serve students, that it's their first chance,
20 second chance, and sometimes last chance.

21 And I just want to say thank you for
22 giving me the opportunity today to speak to
23 you, and I want to thank you.

24 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to the

1 last panelist, University Police Officers.

2 OFFICER LACOSSE: Good afternoon,
3 Madam Chairperson and esteemed board members.

4 My name is Chris Lacosse -- and pardon
5 my voice, I'm just getting over a bit of the
6 flu. My name is Chris Lacosse. I'm a police
7 officer with the State University Police at
8 Albany. I represent the 400-plus University
9 Police officers and investigators that work
10 on the 29 State University campuses across
11 the state.

12 I want to say thank you, first and
13 foremost, to the Legislature for their
14 overwhelming support last session, and the
15 passing of our 20-year retirement bill. That
16 bill represented something that would have
17 given us a very good leg up on the local
18 municipalities and other state agency that
19 currently has 20-year retirements. That is
20 something that is near and dear to our
21 hearts.

22 Unfortunately we are in the middle of
23 a very bad time in our existence. We are
24 losing very good members to agencies all over

1 the state to better retirements, better pay,
2 and that's what we're here to talk about
3 today.

4 And New York represents a very large
5 population of police officers. Approximately
6 97 percent of those do enjoy a 20-year
7 retirement with their agencies. Currently
8 our agency has a 25-year retirement, although
9 it is an upgrade from what we had when I
10 started my career 18 years ago.

11 It does not help keep people in our
12 job. They are coming in and leaving at an
13 alarming rate, and to the point where we're
14 having a hard time actually even answering
15 the most routine of calls at times. We do
16 not have a small contingent of people that we
17 police on a daily basis -- we're talking
18 about some 1.5 million people in students
19 alone. So that is no small number.

20 We asked for the Legislature to help
21 us seek the passing of this through the
22 budgetary process this session. The Governor
23 was kind enough to offer that as a
24 possibility, and we would be very grateful

1 and appreciative if that could be the case.
2 This could not only in the long run save the
3 SUNY system money, but actually draw more
4 qualified and well-trained officers into our
5 ranks.

6 With that, I say thank you for having
7 me today, and I'd appreciate any questions
8 that you may have.

9 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay, let's see.

10 Deborah Glick, why don't I call on you
11 first as the chair of Higher Ed.

12 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very
13 much. I will address a few of the panelists
14 individually as quickly as I can.

15 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I'd better
16 explain to Helene -- I just see you --

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: I'm sorry to
18 interrupt. We'll restart the clock.

19 But the panel is only three minutes?

20 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: That is correct.

21 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Right. So we
22 have to -- I'm saying that out loud so our
23 clock person, timekeeper, will hear. They
24 don't seem to be hearing me say that. So let

1 me --

2 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: There we go.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Okay, now
4 Assemblywoman.

5 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: All right.

6 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Okay. Quickly,
7 Jim, how many full-time faculty have been
8 lost over the past decade? Do you have that
9 number? If you don't right away, you can
10 provide that to us.

11 And if in fact you're looking for a
12 five-year plan, I -- as I understand it, you
13 want certain ratios. That's 1.5 billion
14 additional each year of five years?

15 DR. DAVIS: Sorry, I want to make sure
16 I understood the second part of your
17 question.

18 Thanks for the question, Chairperson
19 Glick. So we have approximately just under
20 7,000 full-time faculty now in the CUNY
21 system. And if you go back to -- so we have
22 a ratio now of approximately 35 full-time
23 faculty for every 1,000 full-time-equivalent
24 students.

1 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Okay.

2 DR. DAVIS: So moving to the kind of
3 ratio where we have 65, which is closer to
4 the national norm --

5 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Right.

6 DR. DAVIS: -- will require that sort
7 of a major investment.

8 Could you repeat the second part of
9 your question?

10 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: In terms of your
11 New Deal, you say it's a five-year plan and
12 it adds to the operating budget 1.5 billion
13 in order to achieve these different ratios?

14 DR. DAVIS: The piece that goes
15 towards establishing the staffing ratios,
16 we've costed it over five years at
17 approximately 540 million for the full-time
18 faculty and also creating pay parity for
19 adjunct faculty.

20 And on the mental health counselors
21 and academic advisors side, we've costed that
22 around 78, 79 million over the five-year
23 phase-in. But of course there are many, many
24 fewer mental health counselors and academic

1 advisers --

2 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Right.

3 DR. DAVIS: -- that need to be hired
4 to meet those ratios.

5 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Okay. I'm
6 running out of time. Let me just -- thank
7 you very much, Jim. We'll be continuing to
8 talk.

9 Fred, if you could just tell me a
10 little bit about obviously the school -- all
11 of the schools' teaching hospitals lost
12 elective surgeries and elective services. Do
13 you know what -- you referred to Downstate,
14 but do you have the number or an aggregate or
15 can you get us an aggregate for that for all
16 of the hospitals?

17 DR. KOWAL: Certainly can. Yes.

18 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: And -- and if
19 there was to be a debt, we're not picking up
20 the debt service, right?

21 DR. KOWAL: That's correct. It was
22 proposed by SUNY. But yes.

23 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: So if we picked
24 up the debt service, would that come close to

1 assisting with what had been the subsidy in
2 the past?

3 DR. KOWAL: It would -- it's
4 approximately \$87 million for that debt
5 servicing --

6 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Okay.

7 DR. KOWAL: So it's pretty -- it's
8 very close to where that subsidy was -- or we
9 call mission funding, yes.

10 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Right. Well, I
11 think it was -- actually, when I started, it
12 was 160 million.

13 DR. KOWAL: It was.

14 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: But the last
15 time I saw it, it was like 61, and then it
16 vanished.

17 DR. KOWAL: Correct.

18 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you very
19 much.

20 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you. We
21 go back to the Senate.

22 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you. And
23 we'll start with Senator Toby Stavisky.

24 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yeah, I'd

1 appreciate the short answer and not the
2 essay.

3 First, James, real quick, what is your
4 number one and two priorities on the
5 New Deal?

6 DR. DAVIS: Well, you know, that's a
7 difficult question to answer at this point.
8 Because, of course, what we would like to see
9 is each of the pieces. And we understand
10 there are so many competing demands on the
11 Legislature at this point, and all of them
12 are important. We don't like to be pitted
13 against health care, housing and the rest.

14 SENATOR STAVISKY: I know.

15 DR. DAVIS: But the reason why I want
16 to emphasize that the construct here is a
17 five-year phase-in is so that the Legislature
18 could work to move in each of the pieces --
19 the staffing ratios, the pay parity, and the
20 movement towards returning CUNY to its
21 tuition-free-for-undergraduates basis.

22 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

23 Dr. Fred, you're -- one question.
24 Aside from the debt service, which is paid

1 by -- for all the other agencies, you
2 mentioned the mission funding for the SUNY
3 hospitals. And the hospitals we know have
4 been neglected for quite a while.

5 Would you explain what the mission
6 funding would resolve in terms of helping the
7 SUNY hospitals through this difficult period?

8 DR. KOWAL: Yes, thank you, Senator.
9 It's -- what we're talking about is at least
10 going back to where we were I would say
11 approximately 2015, 2016, when what was then
12 called the subsidy of \$87 million would be
13 reinstated.

14 In part, this would cover the fringe
15 benefit costs, because the hospitals have to
16 pay the fringe benefit costs, unlike any
17 other campuses within SUNY. They are unique
18 in having those costs. Furthermore, it would
19 help to make up for the losses in those
20 elective surgeries and those other important
21 services that they have not been able to
22 provide.

23 We need to get back to funding these
24 important institutions for what they are.

1 They are public institutions who at present
2 are not getting public support. It is
3 absolutely necessary that it be there. And
4 that's why we want to see both the debt
5 servicing taken care of and critical mission
6 funding reinstated.

7 SENATOR STAVISKY: I know we've spoken
8 about Downstate and the hospital across the
9 street. Would you compare what difficulties
10 Downstate is facing?

11 DR. KOWAL: Well, I did notice it was
12 just several weeks ago that the new mayor
13 announced that they were going to be pouring
14 in over \$100 million into the H+H hospitals,
15 the public hospitals in New York City, which
16 we applaud. That's exactly what we need to
17 have happen in terms of SUNY'S state public
18 teaching hospitals, remember. And it is a
19 case where, you know, the resources this year
20 are available and they need to be placed
21 where they're needed.

22 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you, and
23 thank your members for their service.

24 DR. KOWAL: Thank you.

1 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Back to the
2 Assembly.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Assemblyman Ra.

4 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Thank you, Chair.

5 Mr. Sako -- Sako -- I apologize if I'm
6 pronouncing that wrong.

7 MR. SAKO: No problem.

8 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: I'm just wondering
9 if -- do you know, specific to your
10 institution, what your share of that
11 \$37.5 million would be?

12 MR. SAKO: I would have to get back to
13 you on that. I do not.

14 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Okay.

15 I'm down in Nassau County, and I think
16 we're -- we're in the -- at least ballpark in
17 terms of enrollment, so --

18 MR. SAKO: Yeah, we're about the same.

19 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: -- a similar number.

20 But I think your point is very
21 important and, you know, I had the
22 opportunity to raise it with the chancellor
23 this morning, that it's great to have
24 100 percent, but when you're basing it off of

1 a really rough time in terms of enrollment, I
2 think it's appropriate that we go back to
3 pre-pandemic.

4 So thank you for that point. And I
5 would be interested if you could get that
6 information.

7 MR. SAKO: Yes, I'd be happy to. And
8 thank you for acknowledging that. That's --

9 ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Well, you're back
10 (inaudible overtalk).

11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Right. Quick.

13 Senator John Liu.

14 SENATOR LIU: Thank you, Madam Chair.

15 I thank the panelists for their great
16 work for our students and state, and
17 congratulations to James Davis for I guess --
18 is this your first budget hearing, or second?

19 DR. DAVIS: It's the first of this
20 joint committee. Thank you, Senator.

21 SENATOR LIU: Good to see you.

22 So rather than Senator Stavisky asking
23 the question that we all wanted to ask --
24 which is, like, if you don't get the whole

1 New Deal, which part of it do you want the
2 most -- let me ask, when we say decades of
3 disinvestment in -- specifically in CUNY and
4 SUNY, so I guess this question is for you and
5 Fred -- what would be a vivid example of that
6 disinvestment by the state?

7 DR. DAVIS: Thanks, Senator, for the
8 question.

9 Look, I mean, the bottom line -- I'm
10 going to give the thumbnail version here,
11 right? We're talking about trying to match
12 quality, educational quality to educational
13 access. Right? We've done a decent job in
14 New York State and the city on access. We
15 could do better. But what we're also talking
16 about is trying to enhance the quality of the
17 student experience.

18 So a vivid example, you know, if the
19 CUNY system were still funded today at the
20 rate that it was funded in 1990 from the
21 state, our senior colleges would have a
22 billion dollars more in operating aid than
23 they have today. Right? So there's been a
24 38 percent decline in -- when adjusted for

1 inflation, in per FTE student, full-time-
2 equivalent student funding since 1990, and an
3 18 percent decline in that same category
4 since the recession.

5 SENATOR LIU: Okay. That's helpful.
6 So if the state had kept up its rate of
7 support for -- this is just for CUNY, right?

8 DR. DAVIS: Right, for the CUNY
9 central office and colleges.

10 SENATOR LIU: -- the state allocation
11 for CUNY should be \$1 billion more today than
12 it is, even with the Governor's proposal.

13 DR. DAVIS: Correct. The Governor's
14 proposal is a good, good starting point for
15 this year. I'll be candid, we haven't seen a
16 strong budget --

17 SENATOR LIU: Yeah.

18 DR. DAVIS: -- since the recession of
19 2008-'09 coming out of the Executive. So I
20 want to be clear on that too.

21 But yes.

22 SENATOR LIU: Yeah, I keep pressing
23 CUNY for that number, but they just won't
24 give it.

1 How about you, Fred? What would be
2 the equivalent for SUNY if the state had kept
3 up its pace of operating support for SUNY
4 since 1990?

5 DR. KOWAL: Yeah, for 1990 I don't
6 have. But I know that just since the
7 Great Recession, it's \$7 billion, adjusted
8 for inflation. That is billion with a B.

9 And here's where I think --

10 SENATOR LIU: Wait, \$7 billion
11 additional per year? Or \$7 billion total per
12 year?

13 DR. KOWAL: Total. Over the time
14 period of 15 years.

15 And where we see the real impact is in
16 enrollment. It is a false statement to say,
17 Well, enrollment is down and so therefore the
18 institutions don't need resources. The
19 causality is the other way. If you don't
20 invest in the institutions, students will not
21 go.

22 SENATOR LIU: Yeah, I don't know if
23 you were -- I don't know, Fred, if you had
24 seen the testimony this morning by the

1 interim chancellor. She cited a whole host
2 of possible reasons why enrollment might be
3 down, but she didn't bring up tuition and the
4 fact that it's gone up quite a bit. She also
5 didn't think that the faculty-student ratios
6 matter to students or potential students.

7 DR. KOWAL: Well, that's just false.
8 They do matter. They matter extensively, as
9 does the ratio to professional staff that
10 support the process of getting people through
11 college.

12 It is absolutely necessary for the
13 resources to be there to attract and then
14 retain students throughout their careers.

15 SENATOR LIU: Thank you. Thanks for
16 your information.

17 Thank you, Madam Chair.

18 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
19 Assemblyman Epstein.

20 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you.
21 Thank you, Chair.

22 And thanks for sticking with us. You
23 know, I know it's already been a long day for
24 you all.

1 So I just want to just go further down
2 the line to what Senator Liu was asking you
3 about. And obviously we want as much
4 resources as we can get to SUNY and CUNY.
5 And you know, what we have been hearing a lot
6 from students is how hard it is, you know,
7 how hard it is to keep staying in school, how
8 hard it is to, you know, stay as a full-time
9 student, to keep your grades up.

10 So I know we need to change the
11 faculty, the staff ratio -- to student ratio.
12 You know, we need to do more resources. But
13 I have also heard a lot around like mental
14 health issues we're talking about, but also
15 like food insecurity, housing insecurity.

16 Are you hearing that from the students
17 as well? Are there specific things besides
18 just additional funding that we really need
19 to target to ensure students can stay in
20 school and get the help that they need?

21 DR. KOWAL: I think absolutely,
22 Assemblyman.

23 I think what we're seeing is two
24 public university systems -- and I will

1 include in this the community colleges, that
2 really are just barely getting by. We have
3 so many institutions in SUNY where I
4 represent the faculty and professional staff
5 that are in such dire financial situations,
6 and it's always blamed on demographics.

7 It's not the case. The case is the
8 situation where the resources have not been
9 there. And students are really struggling.
10 We have students who literally can't pay bus
11 fare.

12 And there was an article about one of
13 the students going up to SUNY Poly -- it was
14 in the Washington Post last week -- was not
15 going to be able to attend the start of her
16 college career -- his college career --
17 because they didn't have the bus fare, okay?

18 And when there aren't the resources to
19 support all aspects of a student's tuition
20 but then also the fees, it means they're
21 paying these other areas where then they
22 can't meet their basic needs of food,
23 housing, and so forth.

24 And that's what we're talking about.

1 That's why nationally 20 percent of
2 college-aged students choose not to go,
3 because they perceive it to be too expensive.
4 We are missing one out of every five students
5 because they can't afford to go. And that's
6 because tuition and fees are too high.

7 And so the resources are needed to
8 bring them in and retain them.

9 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: James, do you
10 have anything to add?

11 DR. DAVIS: Thanks, Assemblymember.

12 The only thing I would add -- I
13 realize the time is short -- is that, you
14 know, I was attentive to what the chancellor
15 was describing about the mental health
16 counseling investment that has already been
17 made with the federal pandemic relief
18 funding. And I think that's been really
19 important.

20 However, it's really critical that --
21 that's one-time money, and it's also -- it's
22 only usable, you know, to hire people on a
23 temporary basis. And I think the investment
24 that we need now is for full-time mental

1 health counselors that are really going to be
2 there and be available, that there won't be
3 two-month, three-month waits to see someone.

4 So it doesn't address the full scope
5 of your question, but I think that's a really
6 important piece of wraparound services that
7 we need to be providing.

8 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you.

9 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

10 We -- I see, Senator Krueger, you have
11 a Senator?

12 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I believe we have
13 two Senators left. We have Senator
14 Jackson -- there he is -- and then later
15 Senator Borrello.

16 Thank you.

17 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you.

18 I'm going to ask a couple of
19 questions, and I only have three minutes, so
20 if your answers can be as concise as
21 possible, I would appreciate it.

22 So do you support Tier 6 pension
23 reform to help recruit and retain educators?
24 And if you have experienced that, then say

1 so. I'm going to ask each one of you to
2 respond quickly, yes or no, and why.

3 DR. KOWAL: Yes. Because it will
4 absolutely help with recruitment and
5 retention of qualified faculty and staff.

6 SENATOR JACKSON: And you're speaking
7 on behalf of UUP, is that correct?

8 DR. KOWAL: That is correct, Senator.

9 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay.
10 James?

11 DR. DAVIS: Yes. Same answer from the
12 PSC, Senator Jackson. Thank you.

13 SENATOR JACKSON: The police officer?
14 Okay -- Christopher?

15 OFFICER LACOSSE: Yes, Senator, I
16 absolutely agree with that.

17 SENATOR JACKSON: Yeah, Christopher,
18 I'll ask you a quick question.

19 Why are people leaving? Is it because
20 of the 25 years versus 20 years? Or is it
21 more than that?

22 OFFICER LACOSSE: Quite honestly,
23 Senator, it's -- it is not a young man's job.
24 It is long hours, it is bad conditions at

1 times. There are unsavory people we have to
2 deal with. It does age the body.

3 We are -- statistically, we do not
4 make it very far through retirement,
5 unfortunately. A 20-year retirement gives an
6 officer the ability to say "I am done when
7 I'm done." Twenty years in this job can be
8 many lifetimes in others.

9 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay, thank you.

10 OFFICER LACOSSE: We definitely don't
11 wish to stay.

12 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you,
13 Christopher. I've got to move on with the
14 questions. I appreciate it.

15 NYSUT, New York State United Teachers.

16 MR. SAKO: Yes, I'd like -- I'm
17 Andrew Sako from the community colleges, and
18 I believe also the Tier 6 would help
19 our reform -- would also help attract faculty
20 and support staff to the community colleges.

21 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay, here is a
22 question for UUP.

23 The Governor has proposed closing the
24 TAP gap. Is that enough to help SUNY

1 campuses dig out of the deficit from previous
2 years, and do you have the resources to
3 attract students? And I'm saying that,
4 asking you as a union president.

5 DR. KOWAL: It helps. It is important
6 for campuses like Brockport, Morrisville,
7 where there's a high percentage of full TAP
8 awardees, but it does not cover the full
9 financial gaps that are faced by these
10 campuses. We need operating funds directly
11 to campuses.

12 Please, to all of you in the
13 Legislature, direct funding ear-marked
14 directly to campuses -- that's the operating
15 money that they need.

16 SENATOR JACKSON: Where do you come up
17 with -- when I say you, PSC. I was at a
18 press conference this morning, and UUP said
19 253.9 million, \$253 million of CUNY operating
20 and for SUNY. Where do you get those figures
21 from?

22 DR. KOWAL: The correct answer,
23 quickly, is that it involves both what I
24 referred to in my answers to Senator Stavisky

1 about the hospitals, that's about 150. The
2 other 100 is intended to make up the gaps
3 that exist at campuses.

4 It's just proportional
5 across-the-board to different campuses.

6 SENATOR JACKSON: PSC?

7 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I'm sorry --
8 thank you, Robert.

9 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you.

10 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

11 Next, Assembly. We'll go to
12 Assemblywoman Griffin, three minutes.

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: Thank you very
14 much, and thank you to all of you who have
15 testified. Oh, I forgot my video. Okay.
16 Thank you very much to all of you who have
17 testified.

18 I realize that even COVID has very
19 much exacerbated all of the challenges to the
20 universities for all of you, to campuses and
21 to campus life. And so I, you know,
22 completely -- you know, I'm supportive of
23 these endeavors that you all, you know, are
24 striving for, the Tier 6 and the pensions. I

1 realize that, you know, we voted that in in
2 our vote last year for the State Police and
3 how important that was.

4 I know it got vetoed, but I understand
5 that's so important in keeping your officers
6 working there, you know, instead of going to
7 another police force and all the extra money
8 we have in training when we have the
9 continual cycle of so many officers leaving.
10 I think it was 50 percent that was noted.

11 But I am -- I also think it's so
12 important to really fund our teaching
13 hospitals. That's crucial too, because once
14 again we realized how this became more
15 vulnerable once we started with COVID.

16 But one question I have for you,
17 Christopher -- Director Lacosse for
18 University Police. You mentioned in your
19 testimony about the geographic jurisdiction,
20 that you're limited to a hundred yards past
21 the campus. And I do know in other states
22 campus police have a lot more -- a lot higher
23 jurisdiction. It goes to a greater area.

24 And as part of what you're asking for,

1 are you asking for more jurisdiction?

2 OFFICER LACOSSE: That is correct.

3 I will use my particular workplace,
4 for example. In Albany we have the Uptown
5 Campus on the west end of town. We have
6 another piece of campus on the downtown part
7 of Albany, which is about 2 miles away.

8 When I'm traveling to and fro, back
9 and forth, I lose the ability to do anything
10 about simple infractions, traffic or
11 otherwise. Picture me sitting at a
12 stoplight, and somebody blows it, and I'm
13 just sitting there and doing nothing. People
14 say that -- What is he doing? He's just a
15 security guard, he's just sitting there.

16 No, I literally have no jurisdiction
17 over that particular incident. It's a simple
18 add to our jobs that makes us a little more,
19 in my opinion -- it gives us some more
20 legitimacy and makes us a better community
21 partner. It is 400 more cops on the road,
22 basically.

23 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: Right. It
24 does seem important, especially if you have a

1 lot of off-campus students that live a lot
2 further away but could use the protection
3 that the University Police could offer.

4 OFFICER LACOSSE: Absolutely,
5 100 percent.

6 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: That makes
7 sense.

8 Well, thank you to you all, I
9 appreciate your testimony. Thank you.

10 OFFICER LACOSSE: Thank you.

11 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Senate, we do
12 not have any other Assemblymembers.

13 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: We have one more
14 Senator, George Borrello.

15 SENATOR BORRELLO: Thank you,
16 Madam Chair.

17 My question is for Mr. Lacosse. First
18 of all, thank you very much for being here,
19 thank you for your service. I have several
20 SUNY campuses in my district. I grew up in
21 the Village of Fredonia with a SUNY school.

22 First of all, I agree with you, you
23 know, the whole concept of closest car -- you
24 guys should be in that mix when something

1 needs to be done.

2 But my question is about the
3 legalization of recreational marijuana. I
4 spent 10 years in county government. One of
5 my concerns and the concerns of law
6 enforcement in general is the lack of drug
7 recognition experts. And I'm curious, does
8 SUNY University Police Officers -- do you
9 have drug recognition experts? And how many?

10 OFFICER LACOSSE: We have two at my
11 agency.

12 SENATOR BORRELLO: Two out of how many
13 officers?

14 OFFICER LACOSSE: My officers, who I
15 have currently, about 23 or 24.

16 SENATOR BORRELLO: Okay. Do you
17 know -- do you happen to know the rest of the
18 University Police departments?

19 OFFICER LACOSSE: In the system?
20 Unfortunately, I do not. I could get you
21 those numbers. I do not know.

22 There has been quite a spike in the
23 amount of DREs in the state. I think they're
24 pushing for more on the road right now.

1 SENATOR BORRELLO: Well, that's my
2 concern. I know in Chautauqua County, which
3 is where three of my campuses, three SUNY
4 campuses are, they have three drug
5 recognition experts throughout every police
6 agency in the county. Only three.

7 So with that being said, you know, I
8 just want to speak to the fact that they're
9 funding to increase -- it's a very expensive
10 training, as I'm sure you're aware. You have
11 to fly guys to Florida, and it's got to be
12 renewed every year.

13 What is the status, in your opinion,
14 of your preparedness for the legalization of
15 recreational marijuana on colleges campuses?

16 OFFICER LACOSSE: Well, insofar as
17 that goes, most of my officers do have ARIDE
18 training. It's the prerequisite course for
19 the DRE course. It's significantly shorter,
20 obviously. It focuses on impairment as
21 opposed to other factors.

22 But I definitely think we could use
23 the bolstering in that regard. We are seeing
24 an uptick in DWAI drug charges when it comes

1 to impaired operators. So it would
2 definitely be something I would consider
3 highly important.

4 SENATOR BORRELLO: So it's highly
5 important, and we directly don't have any
6 funding to increase drug recognition experts
7 in University Police departments at this
8 point. Is that essentially it?

9 OFFICER LACOSSE: Not that I'm aware
10 of. Not that I'm aware of, sir.

11 SENATOR BORRELLO: Well, I just want
12 to -- I think we should be on record for
13 that, because I do think it is an issue. I
14 brought up this whole idea of DREs. I was on
15 college campuses -- you know, your job is to
16 keep them safe, and, you know, especially
17 rural campuses like where I am, where a lot
18 of students are commuters, a lot of students
19 have cars on campus, and it's a concern.

20 Every single one of your officers I
21 assume has a breathalyzer if they need one,
22 for alcohol?

23 OFFICER LACOSSE: We are all trained
24 in -- you know, we're all trained in it, we

1 have the availability to take them on the
2 road. We have a good number of them, yes.

3 SENATOR BORRELLO: So essentially
4 you're -- all of your officers, 100 percent
5 of them are trained to handle alcohol, but
6 you only have two that are trained to handle
7 drugs.

8 OFFICER LACOSSE: In the expanded
9 form, correct. We all can take somebody into
10 custody for the impairment. It's the
11 observation after the fact. So yes --

12 SENATOR BORRELLO: Which is where the
13 conviction comes from, really, is from those
14 DREs. If you want it to stick, you've got to
15 have the DRE.

16 All right, thank you very much.
17 Appreciate it.

18 OFFICER LACOSSE: You're welcome.

19 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I believe that's
20 it for the Senate.

21 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: All right. So
22 we want to thank this panel for being here
23 with us, and we're going to move on to
24 Panel B.

1 OFFICER LACOSSE: Thank you.

2 DR. KOWAL: Thank you very much.

3 DR. DAVIS: Thank you.

4 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you,
5 everyone.

6 MR. SAKO: Thank you.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So we have with
8 us Panel B: Association of Proprietary
9 Colleges, Donna Stelling-Gurnett, president;
10 Association for Program Administrators of
11 CSTEP and STEP Programs, Michael Molina,
12 president; Commission on Independent Colleges
13 and Universities, CICU, Lola Brabham,
14 president. The next witness on the witness
15 list is not able to be with us today, so the
16 final member of the panel is On Point for
17 College, Samuel Rowser, executive director.

18 So if we can go in that order, and
19 we'll start with the Association of
20 Proprietary Colleges.

21 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: Okay,
22 wonderful.

23 Thank you, Chairs Weinstein, Krueger,
24 Glick and Stavisky, and members of the

1 Legislature. Thank you for this opportunity
2 to present this testimony on behalf of the
3 Association of Proprietary Colleges.

4 My name is Donna Stelling-Gurnett, and
5 I am the president of APC. As you know, the
6 association represents the interests of
7 11 privately held --

8 (Zoom interruption.)

9 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: I'm sorry?

10 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I'm sorry,
11 everybody please mute if you're not the one
12 testifying.

13 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: Can I continue?

14 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Let's try again.

15 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes. Please
16 do.

17 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: All right. I
18 would like to begin my testimony by sincerely
19 thanking all of you for your support
20 throughout the year. You included us in
21 public hearings and always made yourselves
22 available to talk with us when needed, and I
23 sincerely appreciate your efforts.

24 This year APC's legislative priorities

1 fall into two areas: The first, continued
2 support for the Tuition Assistance Program,
3 and the second, continued support for parity
4 across all sectors of higher education.

5 I'm going to focus my remarks today on
6 our first request, continued support for the
7 Tuition Assistance Program. The Governor's
8 State of the State address and proposed
9 budget made clear her commitment to higher
10 education and her support for TAP and other
11 opportunity programs. The commitment to
12 maintaining financial aid is needed now more
13 than ever, since those students benefiting
14 from the assistance are also those that have
15 been most impacted by COVID-19.

16 Changes in the TAP program, like
17 increasing the minimum TAP award or
18 increasing the maximum income threshold,
19 would have a significant impact on all
20 students.

21 We are also pleased to see the
22 Governor's proposal to expand access to
23 part-time TAP by eliminating the 24 credit
24 prior year eligibility requirement.

1 It's my understanding that in 2006,
2 part-time TAP was introduced for students
3 attending CUNY schools, and then in 2007 it
4 was expanded to include students attending
5 SUNY and nonprofit colleges. But
6 unfortunately, students attending proprietary
7 colleges have been denied access to part-time
8 TAP.

9 The latest data shows that about
10 17 percent of students attending APC member
11 colleges are attending part-time. However,
12 the current reality is that as New York
13 recovers from the pandemic, many students
14 will find themselves needing to focus on
15 family or work obligations and may only be
16 able to attend college part-time. So I ask
17 that the Legislature ensures that these
18 students also have equal access to the newly
19 expanded program.

20 Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't
21 take this opportunity to mention the APC
22 Student Leadership Council. Again this year
23 APC members have nominated two or three
24 students to serve on this council, and we

1 have been working with this group over the
2 past few months, discussing how the
3 legislative process works both at the state
4 and federal level as well as why it's so
5 important to be engaged in this process.

6 This group of students has amazing
7 stories to tell, and they are truly engaged,
8 and I would welcome the opportunity for you
9 to meet with them directly.

10 With that, I will end my remarks. I
11 appreciate your time today, and I'm happy to
12 answer any questions you may have.

13 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

14 Can we move on to Michael Molina.

15 MR. MOLINA: Hello, everyone. Let me
16 first thank Senator Krueger, Assemblywoman
17 Weinstein, and Higher Ed Chairs Glick and
18 Stavisky for convening this meeting.

19 My name is Mike Molina. I'm the
20 president of APACS, the professional
21 association of CSTEP and STEP directors in
22 New York, and also the CSTEP and STEP
23 director at Fordham University.

24 I would like to start by thanking you

1 all, first of all, for giving us a 20 percent
2 increase in our funding last year. It was
3 the first increase we had had in over
4 five years.

5 I'm here today to ask for an
6 additional 10 percent increase besides what
7 the Governor has proposed in her Executive
8 Budget, so I'm here asking for a full
9 20 percent increase in funding for CSTEP and
10 STEP and all of the opportunity programs.

11 So in addition to that, what we're
12 asking for this year is that the bulk of
13 these funds go to enable the programs to grow
14 and develop and to be able to continue
15 providing the services and resources that
16 they have been providing for the last three
17 years during the pandemic.

18 What we've learned over the last three
19 years is that what we have been doing for the
20 last three years is filling gaps, meeting our
21 students where they are in terms of what
22 their needs are -- whether it's technology,
23 wifi, counseling, tutoring, academic support.
24 Whatever it is, we are trying to meet them

1 where they are.

2 And the needs are many. Food
3 insecurity has been a big issue, for example,
4 for many students in both STEP and CSTEP, and
5 I know it's been a similar issue for my
6 colleagues in our sister opportunity
7 programs.

8 So we're asking that any increase this
9 year go primarily to helping the programs
10 grow and expand what we're doing already.
11 We're doing a lot.

12 I think there is no argument that the
13 opportunity programs CSTEP and STEP and all
14 of the opportunity programs in New York are
15 the crown jewel of New York. They work. Why
16 do they work? Because they provide support,
17 and they provide community. And those are
18 the two things that help students to be
19 successful -- support services and community.

20 So in addition to all of this, what
21 we're also requesting this year, frankly, is
22 budgetary language that assists the
23 State Education Department in ensuring that
24 your legislative intent is carried out in any

1 funds that you provide for 2023. I mentioned
2 at the outset that you gave us a 20 percent
3 increase last year. Well, current CSTEP
4 programs didn't see any of that. And, you
5 know, we would like for that to not be
6 repeated.

7 But -- and finally, two of the
8 programs that we would like to ask for
9 additional funding for are the opportunity to
10 work with CSTEP graduate and post-bac
11 students who we're not able to work with now.
12 We feel like we're losing track of a large
13 number of students who graduate as
14 undergraduates but then take their Year 2 or
15 3 to get experience before they apply to
16 graduate and professional schools. We want
17 to continue to work with those students after
18 they've left as undergrads when they decide
19 to apply to grad school and professional
20 schools.

21 And finally, we have a Summer of
22 Science program that we conduct with
23 Brookhaven National Laboratory for STEP
24 students, for 8th and 9th graders, that has

1 been tremendously successful and that we
2 would like to offer to all of our STEP
3 programs and students throughout the state.

4 Thank you very much.

5 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you, and
6 we move on to CICU.

7 MS. BRABHAM: Good afternoon,
8 Chairs Krueger and Weinstein and members of
9 the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and
10 Means committees.

11 My name is Lola Brabham, and it's my
12 privilege to serve as the president of the
13 Commission on Independent Colleges and
14 Universities. I appreciate the opportunity
15 to appear before you today to comment on the
16 2023 Executive Budget.

17 The independent sector of higher
18 education in New York educates 40 percent of
19 the state's 1.2 million students, including
20 approximately 250,000 New Yorkers. CICU
21 member colleges graduate 58 percent of
22 New York's future teachers, 67 percent of
23 future nurses and health care workers, and
24 67 percent of STEM graduates. Two-thirds of

1 students at CICU member colleges are from
2 families that earn less than \$125,000
3 annually.

4 Nearly 60,000 independent sector
5 students receive TAP. COVID cost New York's
6 private colleges nearly \$4 billion as of
7 June 2021. Federal relief aid covered less
8 than 22 percent of those losses. This is the
9 year to make historic investments in higher
10 education.

11 The Executive has proposed
12 long-delayed investments for SUNY and CUNY,
13 and she's been very clear that the state is
14 on very solid financial ground with no budget
15 gaps projected through 2027. So now is the
16 time to invest in a higher education
17 ecosystem that supports all sectors.

18 The state must increase its support of
19 the 500,000 students who comprise the
20 independent sector, to the benefit of the
21 great state of New York. You received my
22 full written testimony last week, so I will
23 just use this time to highlight a few key
24 items.

1 We applaud the Executive's proposal to
2 reopen TAP funding to incarcerated
3 individuals and expand the program to
4 part-time TAP. However, we also urge the
5 Legislature to increase the income
6 eligibility limit for TAP from \$80,000 to
7 \$110,000 to expand the program to an
8 additional 24,000 New York families. The
9 income limit for TAP eligibility hasn't been
10 raised since 2000, and the result is that
11 every year fewer students are eligible for
12 the program.

13 Bundy Aid is invested into student aid
14 programs that help more students complete
15 their degrees. It's been dramatically
16 underfunded for decades. Currently it's only
17 funded at about 18 percent of statutory
18 levels. We're grateful that the Executive
19 included level funding of \$35 million, but
20 we're appealing to the Legislature to
21 increase Bundy Aid to \$60 million.

22 We encourage the Legislature to take
23 meaningful action to increase the number of
24 faculty members from underrepresented

1 communities. CICU proposes establishing the
2 Charles L. Riesen Fellowship Program to
3 support undergraduate students with financial
4 need who have demonstrated strong academic
5 potential to succeed in doctoral studies and
6 who are interested in pursuing a career in
7 academia. The program is modeled on
8 nationally successful programs and would
9 provide financial support, academic advising,
10 mentorship, and research opportunities to our
11 students.

12 We're grateful that the Executive
13 included a 10 percent increase for all of the
14 opportunity programs, including HEOP, STEP,
15 CSTEP, and the Liberty Partnership Programs.
16 But to preserve the life-changing programs,
17 the Legislature should increase funding by
18 20 percent.

19 We were very happy to see that the
20 Executive Budget proposed \$30 million for a
21 new round of the HECap program. Because of
22 the three-to-one match requirement, the state
23 will see more than a 120 million in total
24 investment as a result.

1 Additionally, CICU proposes that the
2 state establish a \$100 million Green HECap
3 program focused on carbon reduction and
4 sustainability. This would spur green
5 investment in communities across New York
6 and help the state achieve its goals as
7 outlined in the Climate Leadership and
8 Community Protection Act.

9 Centers for Advanced Technology and
10 Centers of Excellence have proven track
11 records of incubating technology and creating
12 jobs and opportunities across the state.
13 This year we encourage the state to increase
14 that funding for each CAT and COE to
15 \$1.5 million.

16 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Can you please
17 sum up?

18 MS. BRABHAM: Absolutely. Then I will
19 just hit this last point, thank you.

20 The Executive Budget proposes a
21 significant investment in workforce
22 development and includes a specific set-aside
23 of \$20 million for internships and
24 apprenticeships that would be limited to only

1 SUNY and CUNY students. We urge the
2 Legislature to ensure all college students
3 are included in this effort.

4 Thank you. I'm happy to answer any
5 questions that you have at this time.

6 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

7 And we go to On Point for College.
8 There you go.

9 MR. ROWSER: Thank you, Chairpersons
10 Krueger, Weinstein, Glick, and Stavisky for
11 this opportunity to talk with you about
12 transforming lives and communities in the
13 face of the pandemic by investing half a
14 million dollars in New York's future
15 workforce.

16 We know that education is an effective
17 pathway out of poverty. Ninety percent of
18 students who earn a bachelor's degree are
19 lifted out of poverty, according to a
20 Pew Charitable Trust study.

21 On Point for College is a three-legged
22 support system for students to access college
23 or post-secondary opportunity, succeed in
24 college or that post-secondary opportunity,

1 and position themselves for a career.

2 You've gotten my written testimony, so
3 I'd just like to share quickly three stories
4 on those areas that we work in.

5 Access. We had a student that
6 graduated from high school and had done
7 really well, gotten two scholarships, \$1500
8 and \$150, went to the bank to cash that check
9 because he needed that money to pay the rest
10 of his bill. He got there and he didn't have
11 proper ID. They told him if he had a birth
12 certificate to go along with it, they would
13 help him out. So he called his mom up, went
14 to the county building to get the birth
15 certificate, they said sure, we just need
16 \$30. The kid was dejected, came to us to say
17 "I can't go because I don't have the \$30."

18 Of course we wrote him a check for \$30
19 so he could get that birth certificate and
20 cash his check. That's our access part.

21 Success. We had a student that was a
22 D1 athlete, also had gotten a Gates
23 Scholarship, full ride to University of
24 Buffalo, but had no transportation to get

1 from Syracuse to there. We transported that
2 student for four years back and forth. She
3 graduated with her nursing degree, decided
4 she wanted to be a doctor, completed her four
5 years of med school, just completed her
6 residency, and we call her Dr. White today.

7 That's the success work that we do
8 with students.

9 And the third leg is career services.
10 We had a young lady that had completed her
11 associate's at Morrisville, transferred to
12 Stony Brook and got her bachelor's in health
13 science, came back to Syracuse and was
14 working at a minimum-wage job. When we
15 talked to her about why she was there, she
16 brought in her resume and we saw that on her
17 resume she never indicated that she was a
18 Gates Scholar. When we asked her why, she
19 said "I didn't want to brag."

20 That's where you do the bragging,
21 that. And so we worked with that student to
22 redo her resume, and she ended up at an
23 environmental protection firm making the
24 money that she should be making.

1 So we realize that our students need
2 that support. They need that help to get to
3 where they want to be. So while they're
4 going to college and being successful and
5 doing all of those successful things, there
6 is still an additional support system that
7 they need, and that's what On Point for
8 College practices, that support system.

9 We believe that by providing the
10 half-million dollars of state funding for
11 On Point programs, we'll impact thousands of
12 students' lives.

13 There is an article in the
14 Washington Post on January 30th, 2022, that
15 talks about the work that we do with one of
16 our students from our Utica office. If you
17 have an opportunity to, read it. We believe
18 that if everybody keeps it on point, we can
19 get there.

20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

22 And we're going to go to Assemblywoman
23 Glick for three minutes.

24 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you. The

1 race to beat the clock here.

2 Michael -- STEP, CSTEP, great
3 programs. Do you have an idea of how many
4 students move through in each year?

5 MR. MOLINA: Well, there are about a
6 little bit over 18,000 students in the
7 programs each year, so we know how many there
8 are in the programs each year. And I would
9 gather that between CSTEP, when students
10 graduate -- you know, I can't give you an
11 exact number. I could probably check and get
12 back to you with those numbers.

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Yeah, that's
14 great, yes.

15 MR. MOLINA: Let you know who
16 graduates, yes.

17 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: That's great.

18 And so you're -- I think what you're
19 indicating is that it is crucial to get the
20 budgetary language in that allows the current
21 programs to expand. Right, now if there's
22 more money, it only goes to start new
23 programs?

24 MR. MOLINA: Well, you know, you will

1 have to ask the New York State Education
2 Department about that. But yes.

3 And what -- the problem is that they
4 use solely an enrollment-based funding
5 formula that takes into account nothing else.
6 It doesn't take into account what actual
7 costs are. This formula is obsolete, it's
8 outdated, it's been in use for over 10 years.
9 So it hasn't changed. So it doesn't really
10 fund you for where you are and for what
11 you're actually paying for different -- for
12 personnel, for services, and so forth. So
13 that's the problem we have.

14 And in addition to that, the state had
15 put into their RFP a provision which they
16 chose to interpret a certain way which, on
17 the CSTEP side, was why they decided to fund
18 only new programs last year in the middle of
19 a funding cycle, as opposed to supporting
20 both the current programs and funding new
21 programs.

22 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thank you.

23 Lola, if you had to -- you have quite
24 an array of things that you would like to see

1 in the budget. Are there like the top three?

2 MS. BRABHAM: Yeah. Actually there
3 are.

4 I think that what's important is an
5 expansion of TAP. You know, we are asking
6 the Legislature to, you know, move forward,
7 to increase the income threshold so that we
8 can capture another 24,000 New York students
9 that would be eligible for the program. And
10 we think that that's very important.

11 Secondly, we would like to see an
12 increase in Bundy Aid. Currently the program
13 is funded at \$35 million; we were happy to
14 see that in the budget. But we're asking for
15 an increase to \$60 million so that we can
16 better support student needs.

17 You know, Bundy Aid is the only
18 program that we have -- the only unrestricted
19 source of funding that we have that we can
20 use to provide direct student aid and
21 provide --

22 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: We're out of
23 time. So number three?

24 MS. BRABHAM: -- wraparound services

1 that students need to graduate. So that's
2 very important.

3 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: So number three?

4 MS. BRABHAM: I think number three --
5 you know, the other thing that we're looking
6 at is -- you know, we were happy to see that
7 there was \$30 million in the budget for
8 HECap.

9 We'd like to see a \$100 million round
10 of green HECap which would really
11 well-position the schools to be able to
12 undertake projects that help them reduce the
13 carbon footprint and also, you know, do
14 things like electrify their fleet of vehicles
15 and things that help the state meet its
16 climate goals.

17 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: So is that 30
18 plus 100, or is 30 included in 100?

19 MS. BRABHAM: That would be 30 plus
20 100, and the --

21 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: I see. Okay.
22 Thank you.

23 MS. BRABHAM: Thank you.

24 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thanks a lot.

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Senate, do you
2 have any questioners?

3 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I just -- Senator
4 Stavisky?

5 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yes. Thank you.

6 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Senator Stavisky.
7 Thank you.

8 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you,
9 Senator Krueger.

10 Donna, real quick -- how have the
11 proprietary colleges weathered the pandemic,
12 and what happened to your enrollment?

13 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: They have
14 weathered it, you know, with the focus on
15 their student's safety, as always. Right?
16 When the pandemic first hit, they
17 transitioned everyone smoothly to an online
18 program.

19 As we have moved through the pandemic,
20 you know, their priority has always been
21 focused on their students and their safety,
22 their faculty and their safety. This past
23 year we have started to bring students back
24 on campus. They're of course following all

1 the same state and federal protocols:
2 Masking, some are requiring vaccines and
3 boosters, and some are just strongly
4 encouraging. But they've really done a great
5 job, I would say, overall.

6 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

7 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: Obviously, you
8 know, with their student focus it's kind of
9 hard not to. But --

10 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

11 I want to thank Monroe particularly
12 for their work during that terrible fire in
13 the Bronx. They really stepped up and made
14 such a contribution. It's appreciated.

15 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: Thank you.

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: Lola, can I ask you
17 a number of quick questions?

18 Bundy Aid. Would you remind us who
19 the beneficiaries are who receive Bundy Aid?

20 MS. BRABHAM: Bundy Aid goes directly
21 to support student aid, directly to the
22 students, you know, to help them meet the
23 cost of their tuition, to provide tutoring
24 services, all of the support services that

1 students need to get to graduation.

2 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you. I mean,
3 obviously I knew the answer, but I think
4 people don't realize who benefits, and that's
5 the students who need the money most.

6 MS. BRABHAM: That's right.

7 SENATOR STAVISKY: Secondly, Enhanced
8 TAP. Linares testified that fewer than
9 25 colleges have applied. Do you see any
10 remedies down the road?

11 MS. BRABHAM: Look, you know, the
12 problem with the enhanced tuition awards,
13 Senator, I think is that --

14 SENATOR STAVISKY: It's a match.

15 MS. BRABHAM: Right, it's the match.

16 But it's also that it's poorly timed.
17 You know, it's my understanding that awards
18 don't come out until the fall, after students
19 have already made their decisions about where
20 they're going to go to college. So that's
21 not part of the kind of -- that's not part of
22 what they get to incorporate when they're
23 thinking about where they're going to go and
24 how much money they're going to have.

1 There's also a lottery component to
2 this program which acts as a disincentive for
3 students to apply because, you know, although
4 they may be eligible --

5 SENATOR STAVISKY: One more question
6 in -- I don't mean to cut you short -- real
7 quick.

8 MS. BRABHAM: That's fine.

9 SENATOR STAVISKY: The closing of
10 colleges just bothers me, because several
11 have closed. What do you recommend?
12 Are there more down the road, and what do you
13 recommend to remedy?

14 MS. BRABHAM: Well, I will -- it would
15 be irresponsible, you know, for me to comment
16 on -- or, you know, on any colleges that I
17 think might close down the road. I don't
18 have any knowledge of any schools
19 contemplating that right now.

20 But the best thing that we can do is
21 provide, you know -- increase the amount of
22 student aid that the students need in order
23 to pursue their studies.

24 SENATOR STAVISKY: Thank you.

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Now we go to
2 Assemblyman Epstein, three minutes.

3 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you.

4 And just to both of you, what
5 percentage of your institutions have publicly
6 available charging stations on their
7 campuses?

8 MS. BRABHAM: Senator {sic}, I know
9 that we have charging stations. I cannot
10 tell you what percentage, but I'd be happy to
11 get back to you with that.

12 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: That'd be great.

13 MS. BRABHAM: Yes.

14 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: I was going to
15 say the same thing. I know we have some, but
16 I'm not sure exactly how many. So we'll get
17 that back to you.

18 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Yeah, and what
19 are the barriers, if any, to getting more
20 stations put in? We have put a lot of state
21 money aside to help, and if your campuses
22 have people who are driving, we need charging
23 stations. That would be great.

24 And then just a second question, just

1 on the vaccination requirements. You need to
2 let us know what percentage of your
3 institutions have a vaccination requirement
4 versus ones that don't.

5 MS. BRABHAM: Well, for the
6 independent sector, 94 of our 110 members
7 currently have a vaccination requirement for
8 students, and another 84 for faculty.

9 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: I was going to
10 say from the APC's perspective, I want to say
11 probably seven or eight of our 11 member
12 institutions have actual requirements, and
13 the others are strongly encouraging.

14 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Great.

15 And the last is last year we put in
16 \$2 million for students with disabilities to
17 get additional resources. We heard earlier
18 today that that \$2 million hasn't been
19 allocated, but SED also requested a
20 \$15 million increase -- an increase of
21 \$13 million.

22 Do you support that increase? And
23 what would you do with those resources for
24 those students with disabilities on your

1 campuses?

2 MS. BRABHAM: We definitely -- the
3 independent sector definitely supports SED's
4 request.

5 You know, I was listening to the
6 testimony earlier today where, you know, the
7 commissioner said that the system has about
8 80,000 students who require this type of
9 support. We're in full support of that, you
10 know. And if that money was to come to
11 fruition, I would imagine it would be used
12 for, you know, a number of things, including
13 student mental health services and for, you
14 know, vulnerable students that have physical
15 disabilities and other kinds of disabilities
16 to provide adaptive equipment, and things
17 like that.

18 So we're in full support of it.

19 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: APC is also in
20 full support of the request for the
21 additional 15 million. Our use of that
22 really would go more towards faculty
23 training, you know, the whole gist behind it
24 is to supplement, not supplant, already

1 offered services to folks with disabilities.

2 So faculty training and helping to
3 help identify those students I think is where
4 we would be looking to use those funds.

5 ASSEMBLYMAN EPSTEIN: Thank you all.

6 Thank you, Chair.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to the
8 Senate.

9 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

10 We have Senator Robert Jackson.

11 SENATOR JACKSON: Good afternoon,
12 everyone. Good to see you. It's been a long
13 day. I've been standing up for several
14 hours, and now I'm sitting down again. And
15 so I hope are you doing okay.

16 So first let me thank you for coming
17 in and advocating for the students that you
18 represent.

19 And I have a question about -- the
20 Executive Budget prohibits the practice of
21 withholding transcripts for failure to pay
22 student-related debt, fining institutions
23 \$500 per violation.

24 Are nonprofit colleges ready and

1 willing to cease transcript withholdings?
2 CUNY and SUNY have both announced an end to
3 the practice. And what prevents independent
4 colleges from taking the same action? Can
5 you each comment quickly whether or not you
6 have or you have not?

7 MS. BRABHAM: Senator, speaking for
8 the independent sector, I will say that we
9 understand the idea behind this initiative.

10 But I think that, you know, our
11 position is that it would -- you know, we
12 would like to have some protection for both
13 the students and for the schools in the form
14 of having the ability to call students in for
15 a meeting, to counsel them so that they
16 understand exactly what their debt is, that
17 they understand some of the longer-term
18 ramifications of carrying debt long-term or
19 not paying it at all, and also having an
20 opportunity to sit down with the student and
21 try to put a payment plan in place.

22 We do recognize that sometimes that's
23 not going to be possible, and schools would
24 move forward with releasing transcripts to

1 employers or for military service or -- and,
2 you know, for official uses.

3 SENATOR JACKSON: I appreciate your
4 response.

5 Anybody else on this?

6 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: I was going to
7 say, from the proprietary sector, I
8 completely agree with what Lola said.

9 You know, we are happy to do whatever
10 the Legislature finally decides, but it is an
11 opportunity for us to have contact and engage
12 with the students, you know, and work with
13 them on financial literacy and student loan
14 counseling.

15 So we do think that's important.

16 SENATOR JACKSON: Yeah, I agree, to
17 sit down and communicate -- but the most
18 important thing, these are individuals that
19 are struggling in order to get a degree and
20 to get a job so they can pay back the loans
21 and whatever, but they need a transcript
22 of -- a lot of them -- to be employed, and
23 this is a block which is blocking their way.

24 Anybody else, quickly, if you don't

1 mind?

2 Okay. Do your institutions currently
3 have course offerings at any of the
4 correctional facilities in the State of
5 New York? Where, and how many students are
6 served? Anybody can answer. Quickly,
7 please.

8 MS. BRABHAM: Yes, Senator, the
9 independent sector, I believe we have
10 12 institutions that currently participate in
11 programs or run programs that provide
12 in-prison education.

13 In fact, you know, renowned programs.
14 If you look at Bard, that has a national and
15 I'd even say international reputation for the
16 wonderful job that they do.

17 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay. And others,
18 my staff will follow up.

19 Sadiya -- I was looking at that, I
20 said, Wait a minute, that's not my daughter.
21 My daughter's name is Saadya spelled with two
22 As, S-A-A-D-Y-A, named after her
23 great-grandmother. As-salamu alaykum,
24 sister.

1 All right, thank you, everyone, my
2 time is up.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We go to
4 Assemblywoman Simon.

5 We're not hearing you, Jo Anne.
6 Right. We still can't hear you. Have you
7 tried muting and unmuting yourself?
8 Otherwise --

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Check on the
10 lower right-hand side whether you have a
11 light on on your screen on the hardware. If
12 you have a light, knock it off.

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: How is that?

14 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Better. We got
15 you.

16 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Okay. Thank
17 you. I had no idea what that little light
18 meant.

19 (Laughter.)

20 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: So I appreciate
21 it, and I thank you all for your patience.

22 This issue of money for students with
23 disabilities, I'm pleased that all of you are
24 supportive of that additional funding. And I

1 think that, you know, the testimony from the
2 APC that the -- Gurnett said that what you
3 would do with it, the issue about identifying
4 students with disabilities and making that
5 accessible to them is a huge dollar figure.

6 Having represented students for years,
7 I know just how much that costs. I'm not
8 sure if the \$15 million would be able to do
9 it, and certainly the proprietary schools are
10 not the only ones. This is a huge issue
11 throughout higher education.

12 So I'm glad that you raised that
13 issue. I think we need a whole lot more
14 money to do that. And -- but I do believe
15 that there is a lot to be done in training
16 faculty to understand rights and
17 responsibilities and know how to accommodate.

18 I'm curious about how your
19 institutions have their disability services
20 set up. In some places it's a part-time
21 thing, and some places it's a dean. How is
22 that set up on -- both in independent
23 colleges as well as the proprietary schools,
24 if you have an answer.

1 MS. STELLING-GURNETT: Well, for the
2 proprietary sector, I can tell you they're
3 very hands-on with their students, so I think
4 it's done in a lot of ways.

5 Most of them do have an independent
6 department that works with students with
7 disabilities, but really it goes well beyond
8 that. Other faculty, staff members that
9 recognize students with disabilities, you
10 know, can direct them in that direction. So
11 that's how we handle it.

12 MS. BRABHAM: Senator, yes, you know,
13 our campuses all have offices for students
14 with disabilities, but then of course they
15 work collaboratively with other offices
16 across campuses to make sure that students'
17 needs are met.

18 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SIMON: Thank you.

19 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Back to me.

20 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes, if you
21 have --

22 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: We do.

23 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We do have
24 another Assemblymember. But --

1 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay. I just
2 have a very quick question.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Sure.

4 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: These are for
5 On Point for College. I'm not familiar with
6 you, so how big is your annual budget?

7 MR. ROWSER: The annual budget,
8 \$2.5 million a year.

9 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: And that's
10 privately raised? There's no government
11 money now?

12 MR. ROWSER: There is some government
13 money. We get some county money, some
14 federal money, we get individual donors,
15 corporations -- a smorgasbord of fundraising
16 that we do.

17 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: How many students
18 do you work with per year?

19 MR. ROWSER: We have about 500 new
20 students, between our two offices, that go
21 off to college. We have about 2500 that are
22 in college. And we have another 600 or 700
23 that we're working with that are doing career
24 service opportunities.

1 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: And do you do,
2 looking at longitudinal success, how many of
3 the kids you work with do go on to college,
4 complete college, et cetera?

5 MR. ROWSER: Well, we work with them
6 to go to college or another post-secondary
7 opportunity. Right around 80 percent of our
8 students persist -- that's the rate that's
9 easiest for us to keep right now -- from the
10 first to the second year of college.

11 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: You don't follow
12 after that?

13 MR. ROWSER: Oh, yeah, we continue to
14 follow. It's just that our students transfer
15 a lot, so that persistence rate changes a
16 little bit.

17 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: And on the
18 website you have a lot of sites, but you say
19 there's just really two offices?

20 MR. ROWSER: We have two main offices.
21 We work in seven counties. But we have an
22 office in Utica, an office in Syracuse. And
23 then we work in Cayuga County, Cortland
24 County, Oswego County, Madison County,

1 Herkimer County. And we have two partners in
2 New York City, one in Manhattan -- Goddard
3 Riverside -- and one in the Bronx.

4 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: How do the kids
5 find you?

6 MR. ROWSER: Well, a lot of it is word
7 of mouth. We probably have about 700 new
8 students each year that come to us, between
9 our two offices. We do very little
10 advertising. Much of it is going out doing
11 presentations at high schools, doing
12 presentations at GED sites.

13 And we also have a SCOPE program --
14 Second-Chance Opportunity Program -- working
15 with individuals with a criminal justice
16 history and substance abuse.

17 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

18 Thank you, Helene.

19 MR. ROWSER: Thank you.

20 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

21 So we move on to our last questioner,
22 Assemblywoman Buttenschon.

23 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BUTTENSCHON: Thank you,
24 Chairs. And thank you to the panel.

1 I just want to reconfirm the
2 importance of our students with special needs
3 that my colleague Simon had discussed.

4 And Senator Krueger asked the
5 questions to Sam. On Point is in the
6 district that I represent, and I know that --
7 so many students I meet that have gone
8 through your program.

9 Is there anything we could do to
10 assist with the tracking? I know that those
11 are always great questions. When you say
12 it's an 80 percent rate, have you seen any
13 models so that we could track the great work
14 you're doing from institution to institution?

15 MR. ROWSER: Well, we started --
16 probably about three years ago, we got
17 funding to hire a data analyst. So we're
18 working on developing those programs right
19 now. That's how we got to our persistence
20 rate. And we're locking it in.

21 And now we're trying to expand that
22 service so that we can tell, you know, from
23 beginning to end how many students are being
24 successful.

1 ASSEMBLYWOMAN BUTTENSCHON: Thank you.
2 Because I know that's a problem with many
3 institutions that I meet with.

4 So thank you very much to you and to
5 the panel.

6 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

7 So we have no further questions.
8 Thank you, panelists, for being with us here
9 today.

10 So we're going to move on to
11 Panel C --

12 MS. BRABHAM: Thank you,
13 Assemblywoman.

14 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: -- New York
15 Public Interest Research Group, NYPIRG,
16 Sadiya Hoque, chairperson of the board;
17 Student Borrower Protection Center, Winston
18 Berkman-Breen, policy counsel and deputy
19 advocacy director; New Yorkers for
20 Responsible Lending, Carolina Rodriguez,
21 cochair, Student Loan Workgroup; Legal
22 Assistance of Western New York, Anna
23 Anderson, supervising attorney; SUNY Student
24 Assembly, Bradley Hershenson, president;

1 Hispanic Federation, Tydie Abreu, policy
2 analyst; and the last member of the panel,
3 the president of United Students Government
4 at SUNY Buffalo State College, James Speaker.

5 If we could start with NYPIRG.

6 Just to remind the panel, before you
7 go -- just to remind the panelists, three
8 minutes each. Your testimony has been
9 distributed to all of the members here, so to
10 the extent you could summarize, that would be
11 great.

12 And then there may be some questions,
13 and the members will ask questions. We'll
14 have three minutes to both ask a question and
15 for you to provide your answer. So if people
16 could be concise in those answers, we can get
17 through more questions.

18 Thank you all. And again, starting
19 with NYPIRG.

20 MS. HOQUE: Good afternoon. My name
21 is Sadiya Hoque, and I am the chairperson of
22 NYPIRG's Board of Directors. NYPIRG's board
23 is made up entirely of college students.

24 I'm currently a senior at Brooklyn

1 College. I actually left my class early, and
2 I'm sitting in the BC library to join this
3 hearing. So thank you, Professor Freedman
4 {ph}, for that.

5 There are 17 colleges that have NYPIRG
6 chapters, spanning CUNY, SUNY, and
7 independent colleges. NYPIRG engages young
8 people in policymaking debates and
9 supplements our classroom experience with a
10 unique civic engagement experience.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to
12 testify today on Governor Hochul's proposed
13 higher education budget. There is a lot to
14 like in it -- its continued freeze on public
15 college tuition, its elimination of the
16 so-called TAP gap, its expansion of the TAP
17 with incarcerated individuals and more
18 part-time students, and its increased support
19 for childcare and opportunity programs.

20 We encourage the Legislature to
21 support these important plans. However, and
22 as you will see in our written testimony, we
23 do not believe that the budget offers enough
24 financial support to provide the state's

1 higher education sector after years of
2 disinvestment.

3 Higher education plays an important
4 role in boosting the economy of the state.
5 Institutions of higher education are also
6 regional economic engines. State investments
7 in higher education generate economic
8 activity such as hiring staff, spending in
9 the community, higher income, and tax
10 dollars. Yet for years the state has
11 underfunded higher education to earmark
12 other, flashier economic strategies, some
13 that have succeeded and some that have failed
14 miserably.

15 Investments in higher education always
16 pay back far more. But state investments
17 have stagnated, and at the same time student
18 enrollments have suffered. In our testimony,
19 we estimate what it would take to give all
20 sectors of higher education the boost it
21 needs. We use sagging enrollment to measure
22 that need.

23 As you know, as enrollments dwindle,
24 revenues to colleges drop off. Since

1 colleges have fixed assets, the only way to
2 offset the losses are through reduced
3 services, workforce reductions, or tapping
4 into reserves. While the Governor's budget
5 provides some relief, we think a lot more is
6 needed.

7 Our testimony estimated that CUNY and
8 SUNY need hundreds of millions of dollars in
9 aid beyond what the Governor has proposed,
10 and we urge restoration of the Bundy Aid to
11 its 1990 levels. The state has the money
12 now. Now is the time to act and act boldly.

13 We understand that enrollment declines
14 can be the result of other factors as well --
15 changing demographics, a weakening economy.
16 However, Governor Hochul's budget is simply
17 too limited to provide the resources
18 necessary to turn around higher education and
19 help uplift the state's economy. We urge a
20 state rescue package that not only stabilizes
21 higher education but provides the resources
22 to have them expand and flourish.

23 Additional recommendations for this
24 rescue package are included in our written

1 testimony.

2 Thank you.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you, and
4 thank you for following the time
5 restrictions.

6 We move on to Student Borrower
7 Protection Center.

8 MR. BERKMAN-BREEN: Can you hear me?

9 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes.

10 MR. BERKMAN-BREEN: Great. All right.

11 Well, good afternoon, Chairpersons
12 Krueger, Weinstein, Stavisky, and Glick and
13 members of the committees. Thank you for the
14 opportunity to provide testimony in this
15 joint hearing and for all of the work that
16 you're doing for New Yorkers.

17 My name is Winston Berkman-Breen. I'm
18 the policy counsel for the Student Borrower
19 Protection Center, a national nonprofit
20 policy organization committed to ending the
21 student debt crisis.

22 Prior to joining the SBPC, I was the
23 student loan ombudsperson for the State of
24 New York and a legal services attorney

1 representing low-income New Yorkers
2 struggling with student loan debt in debt
3 collection cases.

4 I'm here today to testify about two
5 critical opportunities for the Legislature to
6 support New Yorkers. The first is to
7 complete the work that is already underway to
8 end transcript withholding at all
9 institutions in the state. The second
10 relates to commonsense consumer protections
11 for students and their families with private
12 student loans.

13 There is pending legislation that, if
14 passed, would make huge improvements in both
15 of these areas. Both are important factors
16 in what it means for us to set our students
17 and graduates up for success, especially our
18 low-income students, and especially now when
19 education and employment are critical to
20 recover from the pandemic.

21 Since my written testimony goes into
22 greater detail, I'll be brief on both points
23 and would be happy to answer any questions.

24 First, transcript withholding.

1 Especially when students have account -- so
2 essentially, transcript withholding -- when
3 students have account balances at their
4 schools, virtually all schools will withhold
5 the student's transcript until the account is
6 settled. This has an unintended but very
7 harmful effect of putting students in a
8 catch-22 situation. They can't get their
9 transcript until they pay their debts, but
10 they can't afford the payment until they
11 finish their degree and get a job, which
12 often requires the very documents being
13 withheld.

14 We know this disproportionately
15 affects low-income students. This is a
16 national issue, and we're seeing national
17 action. California and Washington have
18 already ended this practice. In December,
19 U.S. Secretary of Education Cardona called on
20 schools to stop withholding transcripts.

21 Just last month, Governor Hochul ended
22 withholding at SUNY and CUNY and has proposed
23 legislation in the budget to cover all
24 schools in the state. Several other states

1 have introduced similar bills, including
2 Maine, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and
3 Colorado. S5924A in the Senate and A6938B in
4 the Assembly would prohibit transcript
5 withholding in New York.

6 It is not a debt-cancellation bill.
7 Schools will continue to communicate with
8 students and to collect on their accounts.
9 We heard from schools earlier tonight how
10 important that is. Nothing in the bill would
11 prevent them from doing that. The bill would
12 merely stop the use of this one tool because
13 of its unintended harmful effects. Again, if
14 we want our students to succeed, we have to
15 let them succeed.

16 For private student loans, these loans
17 have both lacked the protections found with
18 federal student loans and have a track record
19 of abuse: Misrepresenting cosigner release
20 provisions, accelerating the entire loan
21 amount even when payments are current, and
22 filing lawsuits and obtaining judgments for
23 loans that creditors cannot prove they own.

24 Last year, the Student Borrower

1 Protection Center and its partners on
2 tonight's hearing issued a report on these
3 creditors' collection activities in New York
4 State courts specifically. The findings show
5 a disproportionate number of filings and
6 harmful practices in majority-minority
7 communities. I have included a copy in my
8 testimony.

9 Here too there's a bill, S5136/A6226,
10 that would address these issues specifically
11 in a very tailored way.

12 So I'll end now because my time is
13 out, but I do encourage the committee to pass
14 both of these, which overnight would pave the
15 way for students, particularly low-income
16 students, to move on and to succeed in
17 New York.

18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

20 And now New Yorkers for Responsible
21 Lending.

22 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you so much for
23 opportunity to testify today. Good
24 afternoon. I know we have spent a long day.

1 My name is Carolina Rodriguez, and I
2 am the cochair of the Student Loans Workgroup
3 for New Yorkers for Responsible Lending,
4 commonly referred to as NYRL.

5 NYRL is a statewide coalition of more
6 than 160 member organizations across New York
7 State that promote economic justice. In our
8 student loan work we have attorneys with
9 20-plus years of experience and advocates
10 with firsthand experience about the
11 challenges New Yorkers face when trying to
12 obtain a higher education.

13 As a result, and as my fellow advocate
14 just mentioned, NYRL also supports the ban of
15 transcript withholding across all higher
16 education institutions. Higher education
17 institutions have the ability to communicate
18 throughout the entire process, from the time
19 a bill is generated -- and even prior to
20 that, when they're generating financial aid
21 packages -- to discuss this very sensitive
22 situation.

23 From our experience, NYRL's
24 experience, it is students who certainly

1 cannot pay that are being harmed by this
2 practice.

3 In addition, we also support consumer
4 protections for private student loan
5 borrowers. In New York State, about
6 12 percent of graduating college students end
7 up with an average of \$40,000 in private
8 student loans. That is on top of federal
9 student loans. As you can imagine, there are
10 entire family members risking their own
11 financial security in order to provide a
12 pathway to a higher education and better
13 opportunities.

14 One more point here. We also, as
15 NYRL, support the funding of \$3.5 million for
16 the Education Debt Consumer Assistance
17 Program, a program run by the Community
18 Service Society -- and I should disclose that
19 I am the director of that program.

20 NYRL has been supporting this
21 initiative prior to it being in effect in
22 2019, and that is because it is providing
23 student loan borrowers the resources and
24 information they need in order to manage

1 their higher education debt.

2 The rest of my testimony is going to
3 focus on a key NYRL policy priority, which is
4 the passage of the Consumer and Small
5 Business Protection Act, which you might not
6 have heard a lot about, but you will in
7 coming weeks.

8 This bill will reform our General
9 Business Law and not only ban deceptive
10 business practices but also unfair and
11 abusive practices. Thirty-nine other states
12 in the U.S. have already done so. They have
13 this law in effect.

14 Why it is important in our higher
15 education student lending system? Well, I
16 can tell you, and as some of you have already
17 pointed out, there are predatory lenders who
18 are literally issuing loans to some subprime
19 borrowers. In other words, these are lenders
20 that are targeting communities of color's
21 first-generation college students and
22 offering them student loans with the most
23 egregious terms and conditions, knowing very
24 well that they're unlikely to complete their

1 degree -- that even if they complete the
2 degree, it's not going to be worth it.

3 We also have a long track record of
4 student loan servicers who have truly wronged
5 borrowers by cheating them of the information
6 and resources needed to actually pay down
7 their student loan debt. Most recently,
8 attorney generals from across the U.S. have
9 had to sue these servicers.

10 In New York -- I will wrap it up --
11 again, if we are able to pass this law, we
12 will be able to equip borrowers to fight back
13 and get the relief they need without having
14 to rely on attorney generals who advocate on
15 their behalf.

16 Thank you so much for your time.

17 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

18 Legal Assistance of Western New York.

19 MS. ANDERSON: Hi, yes. Can you hear
20 me? Great, thank you.

21 I'll be the first one to say "good
22 evening," because it's officially dark
23 outside my window.

24 For those of you who don't know me, my

1 name is Anna Anderson and I'm the supervising
2 attorney of the Consumer Unit at Legal
3 Assistance of Western New York, which is a
4 nonprofit civil legal aid firm that serves
5 14 upstate and Western New York counties.
6 And currently, LawNY does not receive any
7 funding to help students and borrowers with
8 their student loan debt burden.

9 So I want to thank you all today for
10 allowing me to come here and speak in support
11 of increased funding for EDCAP, which is
12 something we certainly need across the entire
13 state.

14 As you know, and as Carolina just
15 mentioned, EDCAP was created with support
16 from the State Legislature in 2019. And
17 since its inception, EDCAP has helped
18 hundreds of New Yorkers, primarily in
19 New York City, navigate and manage
20 \$38 million of student loan debt, and saving
21 these borrowers \$2 million to date.

22 While this is certainly just amazing
23 outcomes for students, it is not currently
24 enough. There are 2.4 million New Yorkers

1 who have student loan debt that totals close
2 to \$100 billion. It's clear, based on that
3 alone, that we need more funding for EDCAP to
4 ensure that New Yorkers across the entire
5 state have access to reliable and free help
6 with their student loan burden.

7 Today we are asking the Legislature to
8 fund EDCAP at \$3.5 million. These funds will
9 allow EDCAP to establish a first-of-its-kind
10 statewide network of community-based
11 organizations that will provide free
12 one-on-one counseling to borrowers in need.

13 Managing student loans is increasingly
14 complicated. This is where EDCAP comes in
15 and helps borrowers by figuring out what are
16 their best repayment options, how they can
17 possibly apply for loan forgiveness and
18 discharge, how to get out of default, to stop
19 garnishments and Social Security offsets, and
20 how to resolve their issues with their
21 lenders.

22 Currently there are few if any
23 resources for New Yorkers outside of the city
24 to access this kind of assistance from

1 reliable resources. And if we've learned
2 anything from the recent Navient settlement,
3 we know that these borrowers cannot rely on
4 their loan servicers to provide them with
5 this type of advice.

6 The student loan crisis is affecting
7 everyone across all socioeconomic categories,
8 and this is something that, as a state,
9 New York is in the best position to step up
10 and help borrowers with this fight. We're
11 asking today that you fund EDCAP at
12 \$3.5 million to establish the statewide
13 network.

14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

16 Now the SUNY Student Assembly.

17 Bradley?

18 MR. HERSHENSON: Thank you.

19 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Good to see you
20 here again.

21 MR. HERSHENSON: Yes. Great to see
22 you.

23 Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you,
24 members of the panel, for having us here

1 today.

2 My name is Bradley Hershenson. My
3 pronouns are he, him, and his. I'm a white
4 male student with a blue shirt, a pink tie,
5 and glasses. I'm also a doctoral student
6 studying information science and emergency
7 management at the University at Albany, and
8 I'm the president of the SUNY Student
9 Assembly.

10 We look forward to working with you
11 and Governor Hochul to carry out that bold
12 vision for the future of New York State that
13 invests in our public higher education
14 system.

15 Our future needs legislative
16 investments in critical job sectors,
17 student-oriented services that help students
18 graduate on time and successfully and then
19 enter the workforce in New York State. We
20 need investment in childcare while not having
21 to pay an arm and a leg. We need investment
22 to address accessibility of products on
23 campus for menstruating students, year-round
24 accommodations for housing-insecure students,

1 and aid for mental health. That is critical.

2 And we need to support and hire
3 psychologists who, for example, are
4 individuals of color, or therapists who
5 identify as LGBTQ+, so folks have the
6 opportunity to speak with a counselor of
7 their choice. We can only do that with your
8 investment.

9 We need to finally close the TAP
10 canyon immediately. For far too long,
11 student aid has been a last resort, and
12 students have had to take thousands of
13 dollars out in loans where aid could have
14 been accessible to them with proper funding.

15 We need critical infrastructure
16 upgrades to our 64 campuses. And we have an
17 obligation and an opportunity to be leaders
18 within the field of environmental
19 sustainability. Upgrades to our physical
20 spaces on our campuses will enhance our
21 learning experiences through environmental
22 and universal design, safer and inclusive
23 living conditions, and much more.

24 We also need your help to end the

1 discrimination that student leaders face at
2 SUNY. We receive a measly \$57,000 a year,
3 allocated through the State Budget, to
4 represent every single student across SUNY.
5 S5436 and its Assembly counterpart, A7054,
6 would establish a student activity fee of
7 just \$1. The only fee we will ever advocate
8 for will help pay student leaders a proper
9 wage, increase our diversity as students
10 within our activities, and allow for more
11 involvement of students within our
12 activities.

13 The current system does not work. And
14 if we just had funding sourced from student
15 activity fees like our counterparts at CUNY,
16 we could address this issue and more.

17 Lastly, I want touch on the
18 skyrocketing cost of tuition. In fact,
19 tuition cost is above the stratosphere. We
20 are still in a pandemic. We have bills to
21 pay, families to take care of, textbooks,
22 housing, transportation, food -- these are
23 the real costs associated with pursuing a
24 degree.

1 So we applaud the Legislature for
2 freezing tuition for three years, but we must
3 do more. It is time for a New Deal for CUNY,
4 it's time for a New Deal for SUNY, and we
5 must enact free tuition.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you for
8 your presentation.

9 And next, Hispanic Federation.

10 MS. ABREU: Thank you, Chairs Krueger,
11 Weinstein, Stavisky, Glick, and all of the
12 other committee members for the opportunity
13 to provide testimony.

14 My name is Tydie Abreu, and I am a
15 policy analyst for the Hispanic Federation, a
16 national nonprofit organization seeking to
17 empower and advance Hispanic communities
18 through programs and legislative advocacy.

19 The degree attainment for Latinx
20 students in New York stands at 27 percent,
21 versus 53 percent for white students. To
22 heighten the number of Latinx college
23 students enrolling and completing their
24 degrees and to help them enter the workforce,

1 Hispanic Federation strongly urges the
2 Legislature to include and prioritize the
3 following recommendations in the budget.

4 First, we urge the Legislature to
5 maintain these Executive Budget proposals:
6 Part-time TAP; the 10 percent increase to the
7 opportunity programs; appropriation for CUNY
8 and SUNY apprenticeship programs at community
9 colleges; and, lastly, the prohibition of
10 transcript withholding.

11 Additionally, we ask the Legislature
12 to ensure that the budget also includes these
13 additional policies and investments. The
14 first is linguistically relevant and
15 culturally appropriate mental health
16 supports.

17 As the pandemic continues, the
18 intensity of long-term trauma is still
19 prevalent for many students, but especially
20 for Latinx and underserved students. It is
21 urgent for the state to invest in hiring more
22 support staff and focus on trauma-informed
23 mental health workers for colleges and
24 universities, and ensure that they are

1 culturally relevant and linguistically
2 diverse. This makes a difference in
3 long-term goals for success in post-secondary
4 and career opportunities.

5 The second ask are investments to
6 develop and train bilingual educators. A
7 recent data report from the State Education
8 Department highlights that the state
9 experienced a nearly 10 percent increase in
10 multilingual learners over a three-year
11 period. The budget should include
12 appropriations to attract, support, and
13 incentivize candidates by eliminating
14 barriers to entering the teaching profession
15 or changing career pathways by doing the
16 following: funding partnerships between
17 colleges and universities and K-12 school
18 districts to develop these career pathways;
19 creating mentorship programs for bilingual
20 educators to support their career growth; and
21 creating loan forgiveness and tuition
22 assistance programs specifically for
23 bilingual educators.

24 Lastly, maintaining the Executive

1 Budget's policy to end transcript withholding
2 at all higher education institutions.
3 Unsurprisingly, transcript holds mainly
4 affects low-income students of color, placing
5 a significant roadblock to their economic
6 advancements.

7 We call on the Legislature to ensure
8 that private institutions follow in CUNY and
9 SUNY's footsteps to cancel transcript
10 withholding, which leaves students with debt
11 and no degree.

12 I thank you for your time, and we
13 emphasize the imperative of these
14 investments. Thank you.

15 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

16 And now, United Students Government at
17 SUNY Buffalo.

18 MR. SPEAKER: Oh, yes. Can everyone
19 hear me okay?

20 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes.
21 Yes. Go ahead.

22 MR. SPEAKER: I am here to testify in
23 favor of -- first of all, thank you to the
24 chairs and the committees for allowing me to

1 testify today in favor of the Senate Bill
2 S1151B, the Hunger-Free Campus Act.

3 As some of you know, I'm the president
4 of the United Students Government here at
5 Buffalo State College, and I'm really proud
6 to represent a diverse group of students in
7 terms of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic
8 backgrounds.

9 But one of the great struggles that I
10 haven't heard much spoken on today is the
11 food insecurity that many college students
12 here in SUNY and here in New York State face.

13 The Hunger-Free Campus Act is a piece
14 of legislation which has already been passed
15 in five states across the union, and it goes
16 to address food insecurity on college
17 campuses, supplying campuses not only the
18 food but the resources financially --
19 resources in terms of infrastructure to
20 address food insecurity for students on
21 campus.

22 Here at Buffalo State and many SUNY
23 schools across the state we do have some
24 infrastructure in place, and there has been

1 funding dedicated to fighting food insecurity
2 on college campuses. But it is far and few
3 in between -- not enough to keep up with the
4 struggles before COVID, and it's not enough
5 to keep up with the struggles that
6 food-insecure students will have at college
7 campuses post-COVID and as we move on from
8 the pandemic.

9 I'm very proud to support this piece
10 of legislation and hopefully see it as a
11 piece of Governor Hochul's budget this year.
12 It's very -- it's a bill that is very
13 personal to me on multiple levels. As the
14 son of parents who were on food stamps for
15 most of my life, and as a student here at
16 Buffalo State College in a city with a
17 poverty rate of 30.1 percent, per the most
18 recent Census, I understand what hunger can
19 do to families and students.

20 There is vast unanimous medical
21 research proving that students do not operate
22 at their full capabilities when they are
23 hungry, and most of that research is done at
24 the elementary and middle school levels.

1 However, you can find that that is also true
2 at the college levels as well. Those
3 students are not able to perform to their
4 highest ability when they are facing a
5 financial challenge such as food insecurity.

6 This bill would go very far in terms
7 of supplying the infrastructure and needs
8 that our campus needs to fight food
9 insecurity. And in states where this bill
10 has already been passed, states such as
11 California and Minnesota have been able to
12 supply tens of thousands of pounds of food to
13 food-insecure students and to address the
14 needs of those students and supplying them
15 information about other pieces of
16 infrastructure, such as SNAP and WIC benefits
17 supplied by the government.

18 I personally understand why some of
19 you may be hesitant to invest a very large
20 price tag of \$10 million for this program of
21 competitive grants, but it is foundational
22 that we make this investment in the students.
23 Hunger is really one of those core elements
24 of what a student may face and what may be

1 holding them back, and this is one of the
2 greatest investments that this budget can
3 make in our college students today.

4 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.
5 Thank you all.

6 Assemblywoman Glick, did you raise
7 your hand?

8 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Yeah, I just
9 wanted to thank each and every one of our
10 speakers for raising different issues.

11 You know, you can't really have a
12 substantive conversation over issues you have
13 raised in -- you know, six people, three
14 minutes. It's, you know, late in the day,
15 and I'm not enough of a speed talker. It's
16 like speed dating.

17 So I look forward to having more
18 conversations in the future about -- and my
19 office stands ready to talk with you and meet
20 with you on issues of concern.

21 And I certainly think that the private
22 loan issue -- the predatory loans are a very
23 big issue. And while we thought we had done
24 something about that some years ago, I think

1 they managed to get around it. So we
2 definitely will be following up with you,
3 Winston, on that issue in particular.

4 And I thank you all, and of course --
5 probably now -- EDCAP's great, we know it
6 works. So thank you all for being here
7 tonight.

8 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: We're going to
9 send it back to the Senate.

10 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

11 Toby Stavisky, do you have anything to
12 share?

13 SENATOR STAVISKY: I can't find the
14 unmute button.

15 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: There you go.

16 SENATOR STAVISKY: Okay. There I go.

17 I too want to thank all of the people
18 who spoke today. And I too am concerned
19 about the student debt. And that, to me, is
20 the best argument for the public higher
21 education system.

22 But we recognize that there are other
23 avenues that students can pursue, and I too
24 will be happy to discuss any of these issues

1 in the days ahead before we come to the
2 April 1st budget deadline.

3 Thank you -- in 30 seconds.

4 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

5 Back to the Assembly. Do you have
6 anyone else?

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes, we do. We
8 have Assemblywoman Griffin.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: Okay. Thank
10 you.

11 I just want to thank all of the
12 panelists for your advocacy and your
13 passionate testimony today and for all of
14 your work.

15 Being that we don't have much time,
16 I'm just going to ask Bradley some questions
17 about the SUNY Student Assembly.

18 I know I have had visits from the
19 Student Assembly many times, and I don't
20 think -- I think what you're asking for is
21 very reasonable, a dollar for the funding. I
22 think that's a very reasonable request, and I
23 just wondered how -- what other ways do you
24 get your funding?

1 And how are -- are people like
2 yourself and others on the, you know, the
3 high level, are you compensated in any way
4 for your trips around the state or for the
5 time that you are, you know, working on all
6 of these many things for the SUNY Student
7 Assembly?

8 MR. HERSHENSON: Well, thank you very
9 much, Assemblywoman.

10 First I want to say it's great to see
11 some SUNY alumni and SUNY grads on the line,
12 so thank you very much.

13 (Laughter.)

14 MR. HERSHENSON: Our funding comes
15 from the state, so as the Student Assembly we
16 represent students across the entire system,
17 and our budget is a line item in the State
18 Budget. That allotment comes from the SUNY
19 budget request, and unfortunately the current
20 system does not work.

21 Our students have stipends that range
22 from, let's say, \$50 a month to a few hundred
23 dollars a month. And even in the short time
24 that we have been elected -- for example,

1 myself and my other officers, my vice
2 president, our treasurer and secretary have
3 been working since June 1st, and we haven't
4 received a single paycheck. We haven't even
5 received any money in our bank accounts to be
6 able to pay the bills that we need --
7 transportation, food, housing.

8 The current system does not work. And
9 that \$1 fee that would allow us to have
10 representation across SUNY is really what's
11 important for us. It's the same thing that
12 the CUNY students have -- in fact, it's even
13 less. The CUNY students have \$1.45 per
14 student, and we're just asking for \$1.

15 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GRIFFIN: Okay. Well,
16 thank you very much, and I appreciate your
17 answer. Thank you.

18 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: And we have
19 Robert Jackson left.

20 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: And we have
21 someone also.

22 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay.

23 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay. First let me
24 thank the panel for coming in and paying

1 their costs. I just have a couple of
2 questions.

3 What do you think the impact would be
4 for students if TAP was expanded for five
5 years, eligibility was restored for graduate
6 students and/or optional semesters, quarters,
7 or terms became eligible for the awards? How
8 can such TAP expansion enhance student
9 achievement?

10 If you have any quick comments -- I
11 only have two minutes and 30 seconds to hear
12 your answers. And I'm going to ask any one
13 of you to speak and let me hear what you have
14 and pass it on, the baton, to somebody else.

15 MR. KLEIN: Hello, Senator. This is
16 Dylan Klein, director of government relations
17 for the SUNY Student Assembly --

18 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: I'm sorry. I'm
19 sorry, you're not on the witness list.

20 Bradley? You're not -- can Bradley
21 please speak?

22 SENATOR JACKSON: Hershenson, speak
23 up. Come on.

24 MR. HERSHENSON: Sure. I'd like to

1 take the question.

2 Thank you, Senator. It's important
3 for us that we have investments. And one
4 piece you mentioned was graduate students.
5 Graduate students right now are literally
6 selling blood plasma so they can afford
7 tuition, so they can afford housing, they can
8 afford textbooks -- it's really important
9 that we expand our aid programs to students.

10 Putting money directly into the
11 pockets of students is what's going to be
12 helpful to us right now.

13 So thank you, and I will yield the
14 time to the rest of the panel.

15 SENATOR JACKSON: Anybody else?

16 MR. SPEAKER: Yes, I just want to
17 speak on that issue --

18 (Zoom interruption.)

19 SENATOR JACKSON: Go ahead, Simon
20 {sic}.

21 MR. SPEAKER: Any financial
22 alleviation, especially regarding TAP, would
23 make sense in this case and would greatly
24 help SUNY students, not only closing the

1 TAP gap or TAP canyon, but supplying TAP for
2 those five years. And including financial
3 alleviation to graduate students as well, who
4 do face many challenges that SUNY students do
5 face -- and even worse, as President
6 Hershenson has described. Supplying them
7 with financial alleviation would go very far.
8 So --

9 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay. Thank you.

10 The chancellor earlier today said that
11 the average student debt is about -- at SUNY,
12 it's about \$24,000. Can you give me some
13 figures in your schools, if you can, real
14 quickly? Anyone?

15 MR. SPEAKER: To my knowledge, at
16 Buffalo State the average amount from the
17 research I found is about \$13,000.

18 But again, regardless if it's 13 or 20
19 or more, the financial damage that this does
20 long term to a student in terms of financial
21 independence, the ability to build a credit
22 score, among other financial needs in terms
23 of personal investments and saving for
24 retirement and building a family -- the

1 issues are compounding, and it is greatly
2 past time that New York State address this
3 issue in the budget in terms of tuition.

4 SENATOR JACKSON: Anyone else, real
5 quick? My great-nephew attends Buffalo State
6 right now. And -- anybody else?

7 Well, thank you. My time is up.
8 Thank you, Madam Chair.

9 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Back to you,
10 Assembly.

11 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes. We go to
12 Rebecca Seawright.

13 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Thank you,
14 Chair.

15 I have two quick questions, one for
16 James Speaker. Could you expand about the
17 importance of addressing food insecurity on
18 your campus?

19 MR. SPEAKER: Yes. So here at Buffalo
20 State we do have two current programs in
21 place to address food insecurity. We do have
22 Milligan's Food Pantry, which was formerly
23 run by the student government but is now run
24 by the administration.

1 And we also do have a program set up
2 with our dining establishments where students
3 who are in need can contact the college, and
4 they are placed on a list where leftover food
5 or food which is not sold for the day is sent
6 to them, and they are told, Hey, come and
7 pick up these leftovers, we will feed you.
8 We'll give you drinks, whatever you need
9 that's left over.

10 But a bill such as S1151B, the Campus
11 Act, it would go really far in terms of
12 building a further investment in
13 infrastructure here on campus. On top of the
14 food pantry, on top of the dining program we
15 already have, Buffalo State would have
16 resources to go into education about WIC,
17 SNAP, and other programs that students can
18 join, to become educated about how to gain
19 access to government support.

20 But also Buffalo State would be
21 supplied with the financial resources to give
22 these students food, even in times when we do
23 not have food to give out. We would have
24 further resources to place an investment into

1 the food that we could supply them.

2 But also this is a holistic issue, in
3 that this will greatly impact the students'
4 ability to be in the classroom as well.
5 Obviously, as I mentioned in my testimony,
6 there is a plethora of research out there
7 showing that students do not operate at their
8 full capability when they are hungry or
9 facing food insecurity among other financial
10 challenges that many on the panel here
11 discussed today.

12 Passing this bill and making it a part
13 of the budget would go a far ways in terms of
14 making that investment in students and taking
15 another one of those little small issues that
16 continuously compound with other issues in
17 their life, such as student debt, to make
18 matters even worse.

19 So if we take one of those issues
20 away, something like hunger, with these
21 competitive grants colleges can supply
22 students these --

23 ASSEMBLYWOMAN SEAWRIGHT: Thank you,
24 James. I don't mean to interrupt you, but I

1 have just one more quick question for
2 Brad Hershenson.

3 When you look at the University of
4 Texas system, the California system, and
5 CUNY -- other public university systems that
6 are near the size of SUNY -- why is it so
7 important that you get this dollar funded for
8 your student association like these other
9 public universities have?

10 MR. HERSHENSON: Thank you. This is a
11 matter of discrimination, and the students of
12 SUNY are discriminated against. We are
13 calling for equality. We want to be exactly
14 like the students of Texas and Florida and
15 other states. For example, even CUNY.

16 Having this funding to support our
17 students will allow for our students to
18 attend regional conferences, support our
19 activities, and it'll increase the
20 effectiveness and diversity of the students
21 that are involved in what we do. And that's
22 representing students across all 64 campuses
23 at SUNY.

24 So thank you for the question.

1 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Okay. I think
2 that is it for the Senate.

3 But for the record, we don't want to
4 be like Texas -- even if you have family
5 members who came from Texas, Mr. Hershenson.
6 Thank you.

7 Thank you, Assemblymember, and I want
8 to thank everyone on the panel tonight.

9 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.
10 And, you know, I too want to thank those who
11 have spoken here. We do have your written
12 testimony, and we will be reviewing the
13 additions that you have there beyond what you
14 have conveyed to us this evening.

15 So we are going to move on to our last
16 panel, Panel D.

17 One of the panel members is not here,
18 so we're going to Bard Prison Initiative,
19 Max Kenner, executive director; Fortune
20 Society, Tawana Williams; College & Community
21 Fellowship, Romarilyn Ralston, executive
22 director; The Education Trust-New York, Dia
23 Bryant, executive director; Hudson Link for
24 Higher Education in Prison, Sean Pica,

1 executive director; and Fostering Youth
2 Success Alliance, Deidra Nesbeth, director.

3 So if we could go in that order,
4 starting with Bard Prison Initiative.

5 MR. KENNER: Terrific. Thank you,
6 everyone, for all your patience and
7 perseverance today. It's absolutely
8 wonderful to be here.

9 I will say that three minutes is both
10 a privilege and also a terribly short amount
11 of time to represent an advocacy agenda that
12 I think everyone on this panel has held up
13 for literally the last 20, 23, 24, 25, 27
14 years.

15 College in prison was once a central
16 part of what we did in our justice system
17 across the United States. It was known to
18 reduce violence, to reduce crime, to reduce
19 recidivism, to increase the likelihood of
20 employment, to increase the likelihood that
21 an incarcerated person is in touch with their
22 family post-release, and to be the most
23 radical form of higher education opportunity
24 in the entire country. It did all of those

1 things with more cost-efficiency than
2 anything else we did in our prison systems.

3 And yet these programs were
4 eviscerated in 1994 and 1995, first at the
5 federal level with the Clinton Crime Bill,
6 and then here in New York State it was
7 virtually the first thing that
8 Governor Pataki did when he came to power in
9 the middle 1990s.

10 My name is Max Kenner. I'm the
11 executive director and founder of the Bard
12 Prison Initiative, which was established in
13 1999. We have enrolled hundreds of
14 incarcerated undergraduates in a diverse
15 academic program over the last 22 years in
16 nearly a dozen correctional facilities.

17 I am really thrilled that Governor
18 Hochul has not only proposed this change in
19 the law, but also done it at a time when she
20 has proposed a radical increase in investment
21 in CUNY and SUNY. The elimination of college
22 opportunity for incarcerated New Yorkers was
23 a smoke screen for disinvestment in our
24 public university system, and it's a

1 privilege that these things are being
2 reinstated together.

3 As we take on this legislation, I want
4 to say two things. One, we have an existing
5 ecosystem of college in prison in New York,
6 and it is the best system of college in
7 prison in the United States. That is because
8 from the grassroots level up, we have
9 established a system of college in prison
10 that most closely resembles our system of
11 college in New York, as any other.

12 Second, when we do this, this is an
13 equity issue. We should repeal the ban and
14 nothing more. We don't need a new research
15 agenda, we don't need to create a new
16 bureaucracy, we know what this does. Let's
17 not hold incarcerated students to a bizarre
18 additional standard than we do any other
19 undergraduates.

20 Let's keep it simple: A clean repeal
21 of the ban on TAP. And I thank you for your
22 time.

23 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Let's move on
24 to Fortune Society.

1 MS. WILLIAMS: Hi. My name is Tawana
2 Williams. I'm an alumni of the WISH Program,
3 the Fortune Society and Ritual4Return.

4 I'm going to be honest with you guys,
5 I didn't do college in jail, but my -- {Zoom
6 drop} -- sorry, my fiance did. But I am in
7 agreement that they do bring back the
8 colleges in jail. Why? Because it's bad
9 enough that a person is stagnating in a life,
10 and then when they come out of jail they have
11 to -- it's like they have to start all over
12 again.

13 When all they have to do is do the
14 college -- which is the point to, I believe,
15 life -- do the college in jail. Then when
16 they come out, they just look for job. And
17 everything I believe is surrounded by
18 finances, so they'd already be established
19 and up-to-date, at least with the financial
20 part.

21 And I do agree with that, you know.
22 So they're already getting Pell back. I
23 would like them -- they're already getting
24 TAP back, I would like them to give Pell

1 back. And that's really all I have to say.

2 You know, one more thing. I know when
3 I came out of jail in like ninety-something,
4 because I didn't do a lot of time, I remember
5 a young lady came up to me and told me that
6 she had just -- she had just -- was released
7 from jail, but they didn't have college in
8 jail, they had cut the program out.

9 Excuse me. Excuse me about the GPS.

10 They had just cut college out of jail,
11 and she was devastated, because now she felt
12 like I have to go all the way and do college
13 all over again. And I just came out of jail
14 when they could have just gave me college in
15 jail. With no debt.

16 So now she has the debt, now she has
17 to start all over again. And she had
18 children. So it devastated her.

19 But I do have my fiance with me today,
20 guys, and he is going to share his story of
21 when he was in college in jail.

22 Actually, today I do have my master's
23 degree, I'm going for my doctorate in human
24 services, but it's on the outside, it wasn't

1 in jail. So yes, I owe over \$153,000 in
2 student loan debt. But that will be taken
3 care of soon.

4 Here he is, Arthur Brown.

5 MR. BROWN: Hello. My name is Arthur
6 Brown --

7 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: I'm -- I'm
8 sorry, just because of being virtual, we
9 can't have witnesses who aren't on the
10 witness list, the tech folks don't have the
11 ability to add names. So --

12 MS. WILLIAMS: Oh, I misunderstood. I
13 apologize.

14 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Okay. I mean,
15 if you want to, you still have a -- okay.
16 But please, other people can submit
17 testimony. So if your -- the person who's
18 there with you can send in testimony, that
19 would be fine.

20 MS. WILLIAMS: All right, no problem.

21 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Then it will be
22 part of the record. Okay?

23 MS. WILLIAMS: All right. Thank you,
24 guys.

1 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Sure.

2 So now we go to College & Community
3 Fellowship.

4 MS. RALSTON: Good evening, honorable
5 committee members. My name is Romarilyn
6 Ralston. I am the executive director of
7 College & Community Fellowship, a New York
8 City nonprofit that operates at the city,
9 state and federal level, helping women and
10 families most harmed by mass criminalization
11 gain equitable access to higher education and
12 combat the issues they face systemically
13 through policy change.

14 The most prevalent barrier
15 justice-involved people face is the denial of
16 financial aid. New York is among a handful
17 of states that bans needs-based financial
18 assistance, also known as the Tuition
19 Assistance Program, to those incarcerated. I
20 come before you today as a formerly
21 incarcerated person, understanding all too
22 well the value of post-secondary education
23 inside prison.

24 I spent 23 years behind bars. In

1 prison I learned how to advocate for myself,
2 organize, and inspire other women to become
3 leaders. It's also where I fell in love with
4 higher education.

5 I had the opportunity to take my first
6 college course in 1990, prior to the '94
7 Crime Bill, which eliminated Pell Grants for
8 incarcerated students. In taking that class,
9 I understood how I became incarcerated and
10 what conditions within society work together
11 to put people behind bars -- and I wasn't
12 alone. There with me in this classroom were
13 30 other women, most of us serving life
14 sentences.

15 Many incarcerated people want to
16 understand how they became incarcerated and
17 what systemic issues are at play to
18 perpetuate cycles of incarceration, so they
19 can dismantle them. This is especially true
20 when you're looking around a prison yard and
21 the majority of the people look like you.

22 When Pell was eliminated for
23 incarcerated students, it left a void in our
24 lives. We lost access to knowledge and an

1 identity we shared as students that followed
2 us out of the classroom and into the prison
3 yard.

4 But a seed had been planted, and
5 change cultivated. Education reduces all
6 types of harms because it transforms the
7 individual. It should not be a matter of
8 privilege or chance whether one has access.
9 Ninety-five percent of those incarcerated
10 will return to our communities, and research
11 has shown that the more education one has,
12 the less likely they are to recidivate.

13 Providing financial aid assistance
14 should be seen as an opportunity to deploy
15 our collective resources as a society into
16 the minds of people who are hungry for change
17 and understanding. That is why I'm asking
18 you to repeal the 27-year-long ban on TAP.
19 It's reprehensible that this bill to repeal
20 was introduced in 1999 and has never made it
21 out of committee.

22 We thank Governor Hochul for
23 recognizing the importance of TAP in her
24 Executive Budget. By turning on the TAP, you

1 send a strong message that New York is
2 committed to educational equity for all.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

5 We move on to The Education Trust.

6 DR. BRYANT: Good evening, everyone.
7 And thank you very much for allowing us to
8 offer this testimony.

9 I am Dia Bryant. I am the executive
10 director at The Education Trust-New York. We
11 are a nonprofit, nonpartisan research, policy
12 and advocacy organization that focuses on
13 education equity, beginning at birth, through
14 college, and into the workforce.

15 Today I want to talk a little bit
16 about a few data points that we've learned
17 even before the pandemic, and things that
18 have surfaced most recently.

19 There's a few things that our REACH NY
20 network works on that sort of set the
21 context, and we would like to see some
22 urgency to improve educational equity
23 throughout New York, specifically in the
24 post-secondary space.

1 The first is to address equity gaps in
2 post-secondary outcomes. One of our most
3 recent reports reveals that white residents
4 are almost two times as likely to hold a
5 post-secondary degree when compared to
6 American Indian, Black, and Latinx residents
7 of New York.

8 Further data revealed that white
9 students are 1.6 times more likely to
10 complete their certificate or degree than are
11 American Indian, Black or Latinx students at
12 two-year public institutions.

13 A similar pattern of inequity emerged
14 at four-year institutions where completion
15 rates at institutions with the lowest share
16 of Pell recipients are 1.6 times greater than
17 institutions with the highest share of Pell
18 recipients.

19 Much of this has been highlighted by
20 some of my colleagues earlier, so I will not
21 go into the extreme details that are in the
22 written testimony. However, I will highlight
23 a couple of elements within the Executive
24 Budget that we believe are key investments to

1 improve access and affordability in higher
2 education and increase preparedness for our
3 future workforce, particularly as we begin to
4 think about the impact of infrastructure
5 bills on where we should move our state.

6 The Executive Budget recognizes the
7 incredible toll that the ongoing pandemic
8 continues to take on New York's people and
9 its economy. To get New York back on track,
10 the state has to focus on a few things.

11 Committing to increased statewide
12 attainment. Focusing on 60 percent of
13 New Yorkers age 25-64 having a post-secondary
14 degree by 2030 will require a commitment to
15 wraparound services for post-secondary access
16 and to really bridging the attainment gap
17 across racial lines, geographic lines, and
18 also around income lines.

19 Improving access to financial aid.
20 The Executive Budget includes several key
21 investments that have been highlighted by my
22 colleagues tonight, and we hope that those
23 remain. The additional \$24 million that has
24 been allocated to support historically

1 underserved students is an opportunity for us
2 to continue to make gains.

3 Much of the details are still in my
4 testimony. And since I have just a few
5 seconds left, I thank you again for this
6 opportunity and welcome any questions on
7 things that you see inside the testimony.

8 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

9 And we'll move on to Hudson Link for
10 Higher Education in Prison.

11 MR. PICA: Good evening. Thank you so
12 much for having us. With our speakers, thank
13 you so much, guys, you did great.

14 My name is Sean Pica. I'm the
15 executive director of Hudson Link for Higher
16 Education in Prison. I'm also the vice
17 president of New Beginnings, which is a
18 construction initiative partnering our
19 students upon return to the community with
20 local contractors. I work on the Governor's
21 Task Force, and I'm also a part of the
22 Advisory Committee for the Department of
23 Corrections.

24 I was also in the ninth grade when I

1 got sentenced to 24 years in prison, during a
2 time when teenagers were still sentenced as
3 adults. I entered the prison system thinking
4 my life was over. Quite frankly, when you
5 give a teenager 24 years in prison -- more
6 time than they've been on this earth -- you
7 really just think that it's a done deal.

8 I entered my first cell block in a
9 maximum-security prison with not much hope.
10 The men that I lived with, the officers, the
11 staff made sure I finished high school. They
12 made sure I took pre-college and college back
13 in the '80s when there was college in many of
14 the prisons I lived in.

15 I lived in nine different
16 maximum-security prisons over 16 and a half
17 years. I was released early; I didn't serve
18 the whole 24 years. But when I walked out of
19 Sing Sing, I had more time in prison than
20 out.

21 As a young man coming back to the
22 community, not really believing the college
23 that I attained was real, knowing that the
24 only reason I had gone to college while

1 inside was not to better myself, but because
2 I wanted to give my parents something
3 positive while I was in that pretty negative
4 place. My mom and dad were retired New York
5 City cops, and talking about the prison
6 yard -- well, it just wasn't going to be what
7 I would talk about.

8 When I walked out, I really wanted to
9 reaffirm that the college I had done inside,
10 not really understanding what I had
11 received -- and I signed up for a CUNY
12 school, at Hunter. I got my MSW, the
13 two-year full-time intensive program. I was
14 really scared when I got called. I didn't
15 really believe what I had gotten on the
16 inside was real. But I walked through that
17 two-year program like it was nothing. And as
18 someone that always struggled in school,
19 knowing that everything that I had gotten was
20 real -- I was the valedictorian speaker at my
21 own graduation, and now I'm back in grad
22 school working on another degree.

23 Everything that these guys talked
24 about that are operating in the New York

1 State Department of Corrections is legit.
2 It's the real deal. We need more of it.
3 These students like myself that are going
4 through this, this is our second chance at
5 life. The programs, the curriculum, it's
6 identical to what's being offered on the
7 traditional campuses. In fact, it's not
8 identical -- it's harder. Because these
9 professors know they have to give us
10 legitimate work.

11 Thirty-four percent of our students go
12 on to graduate work upon release. We have a
13 98 percent success rate, a 2 percent
14 recidivism rate.

15 The work that's being delivered is
16 real and it's saving New York taxpayers
17 millions of dollars a year for something that
18 the colleges are paying for. We need to
19 spread it further.

20 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Fostering Youth
21 Success Alliance.

22 MS. NESBETH: Good evening, all. My
23 name is Deidra Nesbeth, and I am testifying
24 today on behalf of the statewide Fostering

1 Youth Success Alliance.

2 We would like to thank Chair
3 Weinstein, Chair Krueger, Chair Stavisky and
4 Chair Glick, as well as the honorable members
5 of the committees on Higher Education,
6 Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means,
7 for the opportunity to provide feedback about
8 the fiscal year '23 Executive Budget
9 proposal. We'll specifically address funding
10 for the Foster Youth College Success
11 Initiative, or FYCSI.

12 FYCSI aims to bridge the gap from
13 foster care to college success for the
14 state's most vulnerable youth. There are
15 currently close to 1,000 students who are on
16 the path to college success, participating in
17 FYCSI across more than a hundred public and
18 private colleges and universities throughout
19 New York State.

20 Since its inception in 2015, the
21 program has served over 2,000 individual
22 students. FYCSI funds have and continue to
23 allow students to cover expenses such as
24 tuition, housing, transportation, medical and

1 personal expenses. To date, the state has
2 invested \$34.2 million towards the college
3 initiative to support the educational goals
4 of young people with a foster care
5 background.

6 We were ecstatic to see that Governor
7 Hochul's Executive Budget proposal increased
8 FYCSI funding by an amount of 10 percent, to
9 a total of 7.92 million. This funding can be
10 the difference between a student having one
11 meal or multiple meals in a given day, or in
12 dropping out of school to work for rent
13 versus continuing on with their education.

14 In addition to this investment in
15 funds, it is also important that FYCSI funds
16 be easily accessible for youth to access.
17 Through the Making College Success workgroup
18 that includes partners from the Higher
19 Education Services Corporation, State
20 Education Department, Office of Children and
21 Family Services, Administration for
22 Children's Services, and SUNY and CUNY that
23 FYSA convenes on a monthly basis, changes
24 were secured to the Tuition Assistance

1 Program application that ensure young people
2 can more easily disclose their foster care
3 background at the time of applying for
4 financial aid.

5 FYSA estimates that this change to the
6 TAP application can increase access to the
7 program by 400 to 500 youth with a foster
8 care background beginning in September 2022.
9 To accommodate for this expected increase, we
10 are requesting an additional 10 percent
11 increase in funding above what the Governor
12 proposed -- for a total of 8.64 million --
13 now that New York State has made it easier
14 for young people to identify themselves.

15 By championing FYCSI, the state is
16 ensuring that all foster youth who come into
17 the care of the state and want to attend
18 college are able to further their education,
19 become independent and make their own unique
20 impact on society.

21 With that, we just want to thank you
22 again for this opportunity to testify and
23 welcome any questions that you may have.

24 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: So I want to

1 thank all of the panel for testifying here
2 today, and particularly for those who shared
3 your experiences within the prison system.

4 I'd like to call upon our chair of
5 Higher Ed, Deborah Glick.

6 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: Thanks very
7 much.

8 Yes, I think what is important --
9 we've waited a long time for there to be the
10 possibility of returning TAP to the
11 incarcerated, and I think it's really
12 important to have personal testimonies,
13 because, you know, it's a crazy world out
14 there and there will be pushback.

15 But I give the Governor credit for
16 putting it in her budget. I think that will
17 help make it a reality.

18 And Deidra, I just wanted to ask --
19 obviously FYCSI is personally important to
20 me. It's something I pushed to get started
21 years ago. So I'm wondering, with this
22 change, do you have an estimate of how many
23 more young people we might be able to serve?

24 MS. NESBETH: Yes. So we know that

1 there's a gap of about -- between 400 and 500
2 students who are not doing -- filling out the
3 consent form, and therefore they're not able
4 to access the funding.

5 So this means that students don't have
6 that extra step, so they'll be able to
7 identify themselves much earlier in the
8 process.

9 ASSEMBLYWOMAN GLICK: That's great.

10 And Sean, I think we met a couple of
11 weeks ago. And I think that -- you know, I'd
12 like to put you, you know, in an ad, because
13 it's -- we get a lot of pushback for
14 recognizing that people who, you know, have
15 maybe gone through one of their worst days,
16 that that's not their last day.

17 So, you know, I just want to thank you
18 for all the work you've done. And, you know,
19 I think we'll get it across the finish line,
20 which is great.

21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

23 Back to the Senate.

24 Senator Jackson, I believe you had

1 your hand up.

2 SENATOR JACKSON: Sure.

3 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

4 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you, everyone,
5 for coming in. It's been a long day, but
6 it's been successful listening to all of you,
7 about your experience and what you're trying
8 to achieve on behalf of the people that we
9 all represent.

10 So I've got two questions. How can we
11 ensure predatory programs do not emerge in
12 New York State facilities as TAP is restored
13 for incarcerated students? Just think about
14 that for a second.

15 And then this other one, what is the
16 best way to ensure that the programs and
17 instructors for our incarcerated students are
18 the same quality as the non-incarcerated?

19 So please comment, anyone that you
20 can. Just raise your hand and speak it out.

21 Go ahead, Sean.

22 MR. PICA: I think whenever someone
23 questions what we're doing in the facilities,
24 the very easy answer is if you look on the

1 Bard/Cornell/NYU/Mercy College website, it
2 will be the identical scheduling, textbooks,
3 professors. We're not slipping in anyone
4 that could actually do anything other than
5 what's already being served on the
6 traditional campus. If anything, the
7 standards are higher.

8 SENATOR JACKSON: It's a coordinated,
9 transparent process?

10 MR. PICA: Yes. There are adjunct
11 professors that are in the system that can't
12 be -- we can't just bring in somebody to
13 teach a class because they like finance. It
14 all goes through the college.

15 So legitimate, accredited,
16 degree-granting work, every part of this.

17 SENATOR JACKSON: I had expressed
18 concern in an earlier panel about wanting to
19 make sure that New York State, SUNY and/or
20 CUNY -- and someone mentioned you have
21 community-based organizations that are
22 involved in the education also, more so than
23 people from Texas and California and what
24 have you.

1 I want those jobs to remain in
2 New York State, and I want the quality -- as
3 a representative, the quality to be what we
4 all rightfully deserve.

5 So anybody else want to comment on
6 that? Yeah, go ahead. Go ahead, Max.

7 MR. KENNER: Romarilyn, I think you
8 had your hand up first, so --

9 SENATOR JACKSON: Marilyn? Okay,
10 who's Marilyn? I'm trying to look. Go
11 ahead --

12 MS. RALSTON: I just wanted to respond
13 to the question regarding predatory
14 institutions.

15 California recently passed SB416 that
16 addresses this issue. And I think it's a
17 good model that we could possibly take a look
18 at so that we can see that public
19 universities that are nonprofit, who offer
20 incarcerated students access to higher
21 education while they're inside, utilizing
22 Pell Grants, that lead to a degree, a
23 credit-bearing degree, and transfers to one
24 of our public university systems, is a route

1 that we should potentially take a look at.

2 SENATOR JACKSON: Okay. Anybody else,
3 quickly? Go ahead, Max.

4 MR. KENNER: If I may quickly, just to
5 remind everyone that just like Sean said,
6 these incarcerated students are held to the
7 same standards as students anywhere else.
8 The professors and courses that they enroll
9 in are approved by deans and provosts through
10 the same process as anything that happens on
11 campus.

12 If they're not held to those same
13 standards, they should be removed from the
14 prisons.

15 But our colleges are subject to a
16 whole regime of oversight -- through the
17 Regents, through the Middle States -- and
18 creating anything in addition to that is in
19 my view as likely to cause harm as it is to
20 benefit. We should support those
21 accreditation agencies and we should make
22 sure that they're treating incarcerated
23 students with the same dignity as anyone
24 else.

1 But in my view, that is happening, and
2 New York State should invest in these
3 programs as it did for decades prior to the
4 ban.

5 SENATOR JACKSON: Well, thank you. My
6 time is up. Thank you all for coming in,
7 please.

8 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you.

9 MR. KENNER: Thank you, Senator
10 Jackson.

11 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Helene?

12 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Yes, Senator
13 Krueger, did you want --

14 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: I'm sorry, do you
15 have another Assemblymember?

16 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: No. No. I
17 didn't know if you wanted to say something
18 before --

19 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: No, I skipped
20 over our chair, Toby Stavisky, who does have
21 something to say. I'm sorry.

22 SENATOR JACKSON: I'm sorry.

23 SENATOR STAVISKY: Yeah, thank you.

24 First let me thank Senator Jackson for

1 his sponsorship. It was his bill that the
2 Governor adapted for the Article VII part of
3 the prison TAP.

4 And Sean, thank you so much for your
5 testimony. It's a lot more meaningful when
6 we hear people talk about this than reading
7 it.

8 I have two comments, and the
9 question's really for anybody. I think we
10 ought to have some kind of articulation
11 agreement for the incarcerated so that when
12 they leave the prisons, they can continue
13 their education at another institution if
14 they so choose.

15 And secondly, I think DOCCS has to
16 do -- they have to pass some rules and
17 regulations to make sure that this is going
18 to be workable.

19 I really thank everybody for their
20 testimony. This is long overdue. And if
21 anybody wants to address the -- either the
22 articulation agreement, where they can -- to
23 help people who leave the prison system to
24 continue their education -- and, secondly,

1 what should be in the rules and regs issued
2 by the Department of Corrections.

3 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Thank you, Toby.

4 I also just want to --

5 SENATOR STAVISKY: You can just be in
6 touch with the office, you don't have to
7 answer now. Thank you.

8 CHAIRWOMAN KRUEGER: Sorry.

9 I also, just in closing, want to point
10 out that thanks to programs like the one
11 Deidra's working with, we're going to send
12 fewer people to prison to have to deal with
13 this issue later anyway. So thank you for
14 making sure that foster kids don't end up
15 just on a train to a prison once they age out
16 of foster care.

17 MS. NESBETH: Thank you all for your
18 support.

19 CHAIRWOMAN WEINSTEIN: Thank you.

20 I want to thank all of this panel for
21 being here, but all of the witnesses who've
22 come here today to speak before the joint
23 committees.

24 I want to thank all of the

1 Assemblymembers and Senators for spending
2 time with us today.

3 And for those paying attention, the
4 hearing is about to end and we welcome you to
5 join us tomorrow morning. There will be a
6 joint hearing with the Assembly and Senate
7 Finance and Ways and Means committees on
8 health.

9 So with that, I now call this hearing
10 officially ended.

11 (Whereupon, the budget hearing
12 concluded at 6:44 p.m.)

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