

Young Invincibles Preliminary Response to Governor Cuomo's FY-2018 Executive Budget Proposal:

- *Continues to invest in flawed tax credits to tackle crisis level youth unemployment*
- *Continues to Structurally Disinvest from SUNY & CUNY*
- *Proposes 5 More Years of Unaffordable Tuition Hikes*
- *Fails to support New York's Most Vulnerable Students*

YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Governor Doubles Down on Ineffective New York Youth Jobs Tax Credit

Unfortunately, the Governor's FY 2018 Executive Budget proposal doubles down on the New York Youth Jobs Program (formerly the Urban Youth Jobs Program) by seeking annual \$50 million funding levels through 2022. The flawed tax credit does too little to increase young workers' skills and is too small to encourage employers to hire more young people. Instead, the state should invest limited dollars in training disadvantaged young adults that will better meet the needs of employers.

As stated in Young Invincibles recent report, [Sounding the Alarm: New York's Young Adult Unemployment Crisis & the Need for State-Based Reforms](#), the State Legislature should repurpose the \$50 million annual commitment to:

- expand the state's pre-apprenticeship program,
- pass and fund the bi-partisan Empire State Apprenticeship Program for young adults proposed by Assemblyman Bronson (D-Rochester) and Senator Gallivan (R-Western NY),
- launch a sectoral-driven pilot, and
- fund a grant program training young adult workers based on the needs of employers by region.

We applaud the Governor's Proposed \$5 Million Tech Workforce Training Fund & New York Tech Workforce Development Task Force, But Young Adults Need to be Prioritized

The Governor proposes to launch the New York Tech Workforce Training Fund leveraging up to \$5 million of discretionary Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds to deliver industry-informed tech training and connect eligible individuals to employment. The Fund will be disbursed to training providers through an RFP process, reviewed and informed by industry leaders in what are among the state's fastest growing and highest paying occupations in New York State.

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Relatedly, the Governor proposes the launch of the New York Tech Workforce Task Force, which will convene a body of industry experts, academic leaders, and state officials who will inform New York's K-12, college, workforce and economic development investments and ensure their continued alignment with 21st century workforce demands. The Tech Workforce Task Force will deliver recommendations to modernize curricula at education institutions, create a more effective workforce training system for technology occupations in high demand, and lay a foundation for a workforce strategy that is responsive to the ever-changing technology workforce needs. Its work will engage industry leaders in defining workforce needs, building the localized training and education solutions to meet these needs, and informing workforce investments and educational alignment efforts statewide.

The State Legislature should:

- Support the \$5 million Tech Workforce Training Fund, but should ensure that there are protected spots to recruit, train, and employ disadvantaged young adults from across the state--especially those who are underrepresented in the identified growing sectors.
- Support the New York Tech Workforce Development Taskforce, but should ensure that the needs of young adults--especially disadvantaged young adults from underserved communities--are represented in the process and in the outcomes of the Taskforce itself.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Tuition-Free Proposal is Last Dollar Aid, Excluding NY's Most Vulnerable Students

While we are excited to see the Governor thinking about how to make college more affordable for more New Yorkers, the proposal sets a dangerous precedent in how we tackle the issue of college affordability by [pushing](#) many New York families to the side. The Governor's proposal is a last dollar scholarship for full-time students only, backfilling aid after state TAP and federal Pell grants have already gone towards tuition and therefore leaving the most at-need students without adequate financial aid. College affordability also means helping students pay for the non-tuition related costs, which account for the majority of the costs associated with going to college and contribute to students borrowing more loans.

The Governor's Tuition-Free criteria for "full-time" - defined as 15 credit hours per semester - is not aligned with the state and federal financial aid definition used to determine "full-time" student status - defined as 12 or more credits per hours per

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semester. Both the New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and the federal Pell grant distribute awards using a 12-credit course load as the full-time definition. As a result, the Governor's tuition-free program will exclude students who are unable to attend college full-time because they have other financial and family obligations that also require their commitment such as child care, having to work to pay rent and other bills, or may not be academically ready and able to take a 15-credit course load.

Finally, the program claims to be serious about increasing graduation rates and reducing the time it takes to graduate, but does not come with serious resources that match that need such as additional advisors, scaled up opportunity programs, and other well-documented strategies we know work. Unfortunately, the Governor's proposal penalizes students who do not fit a very narrow criteria to pursue a college degree.

The Legislature should:

- Scale opportunity programs (CUNY ASAP, HEOP, SEEK, and more) to increase graduation rates.
- Increase the TAP award income threshold to \$125,000 so more middle-income families can access TAP awards to offset tuition.
- Increase the maximum TAP award to \$6,500 or that of tuition at SUNY/CUNY senior colleges or whichever is higher and index the award to tuition so if tuition increases in the future so does do award amounts.

NY DREAM Act is Included Again, But Governor Needs to Step Up

The NY DREAM Act, extending state aid to the state's undocumented students, is included in the budget but we call on the Governor to make an increased effort this year to ensuring it's included in the final budget deal.

The Legislature should:

- Pass the NY DREAM Act extending state financial aid to the undocumented young adults.

Bi-Partisan Maintenance of Effort Funding for SUNY/CUNY is Noticeably Absent

Once again the Governor fails to include a true **Maintenance of Effort (MOE)** funding commitment further eroding the quality of the state's public higher education institutions. Both the senate and assembly passed and sent an MOE bill to the Governor, which he vetoed in 2015. The MOE bill was a promise made as part of the NYSUNY 2020 legislation passed in 2011 that the state would pay for mandatory cost increases (such as electricity), but the state has failed to do so costing the

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universities tens of millions of dollars since 2011.

The Legislature should:

- Pass and demand the Governor sign Maintenance of Effort funding legislation

Unfunded “Tuition Credit” Mandate Erodes SUNY/CUNY & Shift Costs to Students

Unfortunately, the “**tuition credit**” continues to structurally erode resources from the CUNY and SUNY systems. The NY SUNY 2020 legislation also granted a tuition credit to SUNY/CUNY students who qualify for the maximum TAP award where tuition exceeds the maximum TAP award. Although this protected the most at-need students by covering their tuition, it also required the students’ university to use their operating budgets to cover the gap between tuition and the maximum TAP award. The state needs to increase the maximum TAP award and index it to tuition to eliminate the gap that students and universities absorb every year.

The Legislature should:

- Eliminate the tuition credit by fully funding TAP so more students get greater aid and so the universities no longer have to fill the gap in state funding of the TAP program.

5 More Years of Unaffordable, Contradictory Tuition Hikes

Unfortunately, the Governor’s Executive Budget proposes another five years of unaffordable annual \$250 **tuition hikes** to SUNY and CUNY students. For the tens of thousands of low-income students who do not qualify for the Governor’s Excelsior Scholarship, they would be responsible for increased tuition totaling \$1,250 over the suggested five years, which would bring tuition at CUNY senior colleges to \$7,580 and create a \$2,415 gap between tuition and the maximum TAP award of \$5,165. Raising tuition at the state’s public university system is contradictory to the Governor’s rhetoric to make college more affordable.

The Legislature should:

- Reject the Governor’s proposal to increase tuition at SUNY and CUNY.

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