

State Legislators,

In these last days of the legislative session of 2016, we the collected student leaders and representatives of the State University of New York, urge you to reinvest in higher education with the approval of the Maintenance of Effort bill.

In 1949, the State University of New York was founded on the principle of affordable higher education within New York State and has incredible potential to provide unprecedented opportunities for its students, faculty, staff, and administrators as well as the entirety of the State of New York. Nevertheless, in the past five years, tuition at the State University has risen by 30%, students now cover approximately 70% of SUNY's operating costs compared to 50% prior to 2008, and the average SUNY student loan debt has risen past \$23,000 leading to student strikes and other initiatives supporting a tuition freeze and state reinvestment.

It is far past time the State of New York reinvest in its future through the State University. You, our legislative leaders and elected representatives recognized this and in January of 2015 approved Maintenance of Effort bill with overwhelming support in both houses. Nevertheless, after several months of inaction, Governor Andrew Cuomo vetoed Maintenance of Effort and therefore demonstrated he is not serious about supporting the approximately 460,000 students enrolled in the State University and the future of the State of New York.

Without this reinvestment, the State University of New York is no longer financially sustainable and with a continued undue burden on students, can no longer be considered a public institution of higher education.

We, the collected student leaders of the State University of New York, on behalf of the students we represent, welcome the in-state tuition freeze now in place yet now call on you again to reinvest in our futures and the future of the State of New York with the reauthorization of Maintenance of Effort.

Sincerely,

The collected Students of the State University of New York,  
New York Students Rising,  
& the Student Assembly of the State University of New York