

KEEP THE STATE IN THE STATE UNIVERSITY

The Governor's budget proposal would move the State University of New York's (SUNY) budget and operations into the shadows, removing critical oversight by the Legislature, Attorney General, and Comptroller.

“The Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act” is described by the Governor and SUNY as a means to give management essential flexibility, but in reality the proposal goes too far in removing oversight and accountability as it relates to contracts for services and public-private partnerships. It essentially hands over the reins of an over \$4 billion budget and invaluable public institution to unelected appointees without adequate checks and balances.

The Governors' proposal:

- Authorizes the lease of property under the jurisdiction of SUNY and the participation in public/private partnerships without legislative approval.
- Eliminates pre-audit requirements for the Attorney General's approval of certain leases.
- Allows SUNY to enter into contracts for services without pre-approval by the Office of the State Comptroller in the procurement of goods and services.
- Moves SUNY finances off-budget and allows for differential tuition depending on college and program.

- FACT** SUNY is a taxpayer funded public institution that belongs to the people of New York, not SUNY officials. The people through their elected representatives must have a say in SUNY budgeting and operations.
- FACT** The review of contracts for services by oversight agencies like the Comptroller and Attorney General exists for a good reason - to make sure that the public interest is protected.
- FACT** The proposed language is so broad it could lead to unanticipated results that could alter SUNY's operation without real public input. For example, parts of SUNY campuses could be leased out to private operators, or SUNY professional employees could be replaced by contractors.
- FACT** SUNY has never demonstrated the need for these proposals. In fact, many of the transactions for which they seek autonomy, can be entered into and have been entered into in the past under the current statutory framework.
- FACT** Cloaked in secrecy and plagued by investigations, SUNY's own unaccountable offspring – the Research Foundation – is evidence of what can happen when SUNY is left to its own devices.

SUNY OFFICIALS' AVERSION TO SEEKING THE STATE'S APPROVAL IS SIMPLY NOT A GOOD ENOUGH REASON TO GIVE SUNY OFFICIALS A BLANK CHECK WITH TAXPAYER DOLLARS.

KEEP THE STATE IN THE STATE UNIVERSITY.

MAINTAIN ADEQUATE OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

REJECT S6607/A9707 PART E.



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