ECLEG AUG24'12 PM 3:50

A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED BY LEGISLATORS MARINELLI, GRANT, MAZUR, HOGUES, LOUGHRAN & McCRACKEN

RE: Reforming Higher Education Policy in NYS by Eliminating Charge-backs to County Taxpayers for Community College Students Who Attend a Community College Within the Same Economic Development Region as Their Home County

WHEREAS, a recent article published in The Buffalo News on Thursday, August 23, 2012 highlighted the outdated and unfair state policy that requires taxpayers to pay a fee when residents of the county where they reside attend two-year schools elsewhere in the state if a two-year community college is available in their own county; and

WHEREAS, this practice encourages parochialism and competition within the same economic development regions geographically designated by Empire State Development Corporation; and

WHEREAS, the regional economic development planning councils so designated by the Cuomo Administration strategically encourage collaboration, cross-promotion, priority-setting and the sharing of resources within a region to encourage companies to locate within these ten unique regions in New York State; and

WHEREAS, according to the Regional Council Guidebook, Erie County lies within the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council – together with Niagara, Cattaraugus, Allegany and Chautauqua Counties; and

WHEREAS, charging a fee or "taxing" Erie County residents when fellow residents attend a community college in another county within our economic development region flies in the face of the purpose of the regional economic development councils and makes no economic sense; and

WHEREAS, the Charge-back Policy – implemented by state law in the 1950's – is archaic by any 21st century measure, as our region is not competing for jobs within the region, but for jobs across the United States and around the world; and

WHEREAS, the community college system is well-recognized as the leading edge in curriculum development and job training that reflect the changing needs of business; and

WHEREAS, the Charge-back Policy does not apply to four-year schools or graduate schools in the SUNY system, which serves the taxpayers of New York State well; and

WHEREAS, the greatest resource of our region is our human resource, whose education and job training should not be impeded by an outdated charge-back policy that angers taxpayers and encourages parochialism within the same economic development region.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature convey its support for a discontinuation of the Community College Chargeback Policy that exists in New York State; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Honorable Body request that the New York State Legislature and Governor approve legislation to put an end to this archaic, parochial practice; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the new state legislation allow residents within an economic development region so designated by Empire State Development Corporation to attend the community college of their choice within the same region without imposing a punitive fee on the taxpayers of their home counties.

FISCAL IMPACT: Positive for the taxpayers of Erie County.