

**A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED
BY LEGISLATOR MILLER-WILLIAMS**

RE: Community College Chargeback Policy

WHEREAS, recent reports from both administrators of Erie Community College and the new media concerning the onerous and antiquated system of Community College Chargeback Rates warrant review by the Erie County Legislature, as well as this Body formulating a strong message to Albany policymakers to reform this outdated and unfair New York State policy; and

WHEREAS, a recent article published in The Buffalo News on December 28, 2014 highlighted the renewed push by ECC leaders for reform of the chargeback policy; and

WHEREAS, the chargeback policy continues to require 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, highlighting this most recent call for reform is a comprehensive memo (attached) composed by the ECC Chief Administrative and Financial Officer to the ECC Board of Trustees' Budget, Finance and Contracts Subcommittee which understandably decries a policy whereby "municipal tax dollars paying (are) for our residents to attend a community college other than ECC;" and

WHEREAS, "The amount totaled over \$5.4 million in 2013," for Erie County municipal taxpayers, according to the memo, which represents a staggering sum of tax dollars leaving the County's struggling local governments; and

WHEREAS, the research highlighted in this memo provides stark examples of the unfair burden of community college chargeback policy: "Taxpayers in the Town of Tonawanda and Village of Kenmore pay \$846,204 extra in property taxes resulting from their residents attending a New York State community college other than ECC. Taxpayers in Amherst/Williamsville pay \$910,670 extra in property taxes resulting from their residents attending a New York State community college other than ECC;" and

WHEREAS, the Chargeback Policy – implemented by State law in the 1950s – 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 Chargeback 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 chargeback policy that angers taxpayers and encourages parochialism within the same economic development region; and

WHEREAS, further discussion of this matter is warranted by this Honorable Body's Community Enrichment Committee in order to fully hear from stakeholders, and also in order to formulate a multi-partisan strategy and message to Albany that strongly encourages reform of the chargeback policy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature convey its support for reform of the Community College Chargeback Policy that has, for far too many decades, proven to be poor public policy for Erie County and its municipalities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this matter be fully discussed at a future meeting of the Legislature's Community Enrichment Committee where representatives of ECC, local governments, and other stakeholders have to opportunity to discuss this issue and formulate a strong message to Albany policymakers for reform of the Statewide-wide chargeback policy; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution shall be forwarded to the County Executive, the leadership at ECC, and to each municipality in Erie County.

FISCAL IMPACT: Positive for the local municipalities and taxpayers of Erie County.

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