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College Students Send More Than 100,000 E-Mails to Lawmakers *Message: Don't Cut TAP*

ALBANY, NY – Within a few short weeks, students, faculty and administrators from New York's degree-granting proprietary colleges sent more than 100,000 e-mail messages to lawmakers, imploring them to reject proposed cuts to the state's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) within the proposed executive budget.

The students, faculty, and administrators are from institutions represented by the Association of Proprietary Colleges, a statewide association with 26 accredited members on 39 campuses.

"These 100,000 letters are proof that New Yorkers support TAP and believe it is a worthwhile investment in the future of our work force and our state," said Stephen J. Jerome, APC president and president of Monroe College in the Bronx and New Rochelle. "Any cuts to the TAP program are not in the best interest of New York or its students."

The executive budget proposes cutting the maximum TAP award from \$5,000 to \$4,000 for full-time students enrolled in two-year colleges – unfairly targeting the neediest students in New York. "There is no justification to set TAP payments based on the length of the program at the institution a student attends," Jerome added. "This will establish a two-tier TAP system that is contrary to the New York State Regents' goal of promoting access to higher education."

For 35 years, TAP has made it possible for thousands of New Yorkers to afford college each year. "TAP should be viewed as an investment, not a grant, since once students graduate, they are on the path to securing employment here in New York and becoming productive, taxpaying members of their communities, Jerome said. "We must protect TAP – a program that has proven its worth. It's time to continue to invest in our students and invest in New York's future."

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The Association of Proprietary Colleges represents 26 tax-paying, degree-granting colleges located on 39 campuses across New York. The proprietary sector is one of the four sectors of higher education in New York. APC Colleges offer associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in a variety of programs, including business, health care, hospitality management, graphic arts, technology, and more.