



Dear [ Decision Maker ],

The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) makes it possible for thousands of New Yorkers to afford college. Once they graduate, they are able to get good jobs here in New York and become productive, taxpaying members of their communities.

I'm writing to maintain TAP funding in the 2009-10 state budget.

Please help New York college students by not increasing the full-time status for TAP eligibility from the current and federally accepted 12 credits a semester to 15. Students would lose 20 percent of their TAP award if they were only able to take 12 credits. For many, this may mean the difference between attending college full time and not attending at all.

The measure also will impact needier students already facing economic hardships, as well as working mothers, students attending evening or weekend classes, and students transitioning to their first year of college. At the very least, most students will have to rely more heavily on student loans to make it to graduation day, meaning they will leave college with more debt than they had anticipated.

We believe the governor's goal is to support New York college students, especially during this time of economic instability. Yet, the 2009-10 budget proposal places a barrier to this goal.

Changing the status of full-time student to 15 credits is counter-productive to the larger goal, which is to educate more New Yorkers. During this time of fiscal uncertainty, TAP is more important than ever because it helps keep the door to higher education open. By maintaining the current number of credits needed for a maximum TAP award, more students will be able to go to college and become more productive, taxpaying contributors to their communities. Please maintain TAP and help students succeed; reject the governor's proposal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
[ Sender's Name ]