



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0075-2024, **Version:** *

Res. No. 75

Resolution calling on the New York State legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.1983-A/A.1164-B, to require all schools to present on post-secondary financial aid opportunities such as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or a DREAM Act application and for students to complete an affidavit indicating if they will be applying for such aid.

By Council Members Dinowitz and Brewer

Whereas, According to the United States (U.S.) Federal Reserve, the student loan debt balance has increased by 66% over the past decade and, as of 2023, totals more than \$1.77 trillion; and

Whereas, More than 92% of student loan debt is federal while the remaining amount is owed on private student loans, according to Federal Student Aid, an office of the U.S. Department of Education; and

Whereas, Students can determine their eligibility for financial aid programs, such as the federal Pell Grant program and the state Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), by filling out and submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form; and

Whereas, Federal financial aid like the Pell Grant, which is the largest source of federal aid for many students of low- and moderate-income families, helps to make postsecondary education more affordable for millions of students each year; and

Whereas, Yet, a report by the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) found the high school class of 2023 left more than \$4 billion in Pell grant awards on the table as a result of not completing the FAFSA; and

Whereas, Moreover, NCAN found that the New York State (“NYS” or “State”) class of 2023 missed out on over \$225 million in Pell grant dollars, ranking it fourth in the country by sum of untapped Pell Grant awards; and

Whereas, Additionally, after a decade of rising college enrollment rates, the percentage of New York City public high school graduates entering college or other postsecondary programs has fallen from nearly 81% in 2019 to 71% in 2021, which is the most recent year for which data is available; and

Whereas, A 2019 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) survey found high school seniors who complete the FAFSA are 84% more likely to immediately enroll in postsecondary education and, among students in the lowest socioeconomic quintile, FAFSA completion is associated with a 127% increase in immediate enrollment; and

Whereas, S.1983-A/A.1164-B, sponsored by NYS Senator Andrew Gounardes and NYS Assembly Member Jonathan Jacobson respectively, would require the Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) to create a uniform presentation on FAFSA and DREAM, to be presented to all students throughout the State; and

Whereas, Each high school senior would then be required to complete an affidavit affirming that they have either attended the presentation or received the presentation materials and if they intend to apply for FAFSA or DREAM (which would be coupled together in one category on the form), or neither type of aid; and

Whereas, The NYS Commissioner of Education (“Commissioner”) would be responsible for creating the affidavit form to be made available in the 12 most common non-English languages spoken in NYS, and up to four additional languages; and

Whereas, Schools would be responsible for distributing and collecting the affidavit forms, to be transmitted to the Commissioner along with data on senior class sizes; and

Whereas, The Commissioner would be required to transmit this information to HESC for the purposes of compiling a report on the total number of affidavits, per school district and statewide, the total number of FAFSA and DREAM Act applications filed in the previous year and how such numbers compare to the previous five years, and what effect if any that HESC believes the act has had on applications filed; and

Whereas, Finally, the Commissioner and HESC would be required to create a uniform notice describing FAFSA and DREAM for distribution to all high school seniors no less than four times a year and high school

juniors no less than two times a year; and

Whereas, Other states have enacted similar laws; and

Whereas, Louisiana began requiring students to complete the FAFSA during the 2017-18 school year, and it now leads the country in FAFSA completion with nearly 79% of its high school seniors completing it compared to only 44% in 2013; and

Whereas, Alabama, California, Illinois, New Hampshire, and Texas have also adopted similar policies, while Maryland obligates local education agencies to encourage and assist as many high school seniors as possible in completing the FAFSA and Colorado establishes a grant program for local educational agencies who adopt a requirement to assist students in FAFSA completion; and

Whereas, FAFSA completion can have a significant impact in helping students, especially those who are low-income, immigrant, first-generation, in temporary housing, and in foster care; now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.1983-A/A.1164-B, to require all schools to present on post-secondary financial aid opportunities such as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or a DREAM Act application and for students to complete an affidavit indicating if they will be applying for such aid.

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CGR