

Commentary/Op-Ed - April 2018

Op-Ed: Protecting New York State's For-Profit College Students

Far too many graduates of New York State's for-profit colleges end up stuck in low-wage jobs and saddled with debt that they can't afford, while taxpayers are left footing the bill. The State Legislature and Governor Cuomo have the power to change this by implementing statewide standards to ensure that crucial investments in higher education result in real economic mobility for students.

by Tom Hilliard and Matt A.V. Chaban

Thousands of students each year graduate from the state's for-profit colleges in debt while earning no more—and in some cases far less—than the average high school graduate. Taxpayers are stuck with this tab as well; New York channels more financial aid to for-profit colleges than any other state—$72 million in 2015 alone.

In this *Times-Union* op-ed, CUF Senior Fellow for Economic Opportunity Tom Hilliard and Policy Director Matt A.V. Chaban and assert that state policymakers and Governor Cuomo should take action now to ensure that the state's crucial investments in education result in real economic gains for its students. The best way forward is to establish—and enforce—a "gainful employment" standard in New York, emulating a step that the U.S. Department of Education took in 2014 to crack down on poorly performing for-profit colleges. By doing so, the state will ensure, as it has for generations, that New Yorkers can earn degrees that lead to real economic opportunity while protecting students and taxpayers alike.

Read the op-ed here.

This op-ed is a continuation of the Center for an Urban Future's extensive research on higher education and economic mobility in New York, including the recent studies *Keeping New York's For-Profit Colleges on Track* and *Degrees of Difficulty: Boosting College Success in New York City*.

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Center for an Urban Future (CUF) is an independent, nonprofit think tank that generates innovative policies to create jobs, reduce inequality and help lower income New Yorkers climb into the middle class. For 20 years, CUF has published accessible, data-driven reports on ways to grow and diversify the economy and expand opportunity that are anchored in rigorous research, not preconceived notions about outcome. Our work has been a powerful catalyst for policy change in New York City and serves as an invaluable resource for government officials, community groups, nonprofit practitioners and business leaders as they advocate for and implement policies to address some of New York's biggest challenges and opportunities.



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