



NEWS...

From

Legislator Tom Cilmi

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Cilmi Not Giving Up on Out of County Mandates

Legislator Tom Cilmi today announced another round of savings to the County as a result of legislation he sponsored directing the Comptroller to pay F.I.T. for only those students enrolled in the school's Associate Degree program. Earlier this year, Cilmi announced savings to the County of approximately \$1.6 million from the reduction in payments to F.I.T. for the fall semester. Payment for the spring semester was reduced by approximately \$1.5 million.

The issue stems from New York State's out-of-county tuition mandate which requires counties to subsidize residents who attend community colleges outside their home county. While the Fashion Institute of Technology at one time was a two year school, today they offer four year and graduate degrees. However, since New York State still considers F.I.T. a community college, Suffolk is required to subsidize even those students attending for four or more years. According to records, more than 720 Suffolk residents attend F.I.T. this year at a cost per student to Suffolk taxpayers of more than \$10,000 each.

"With both the fall and spring semesters invoices issued at this point, F.I.T. billed us for about \$6.95 million," said Cilmi, "but as a result of my legislation, our Comptroller has reduced payments to \$3.8 million, saving the County more than \$3 million annually."

Cilmi said the whole out-of-county tuition mandate needs to be revisited. He said, "We have more than 2,500 students from Suffolk County attending Nassau Community College and less than 300 Nassau County residents who attend Suffolk. Meanwhile, Suffolk Community College has broad course offerings on three campuses with some of the finest, most experienced full time and adjunct professors in the region. I have asked the president of the college to look into why we're losing so many of our students to Nassau."

Suffolk had budgeted more than \$14 million in 2012 in total out-of-county tuition before opting to pass the costs down to the ten towns. Cilmi said, "Ultimately, students have a right to attend the college of their choice. With a top notch community college right here in Suffolk, our taxpayers should not have to foot the bill for students who choose to go elsewhere."

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