

**GSO Resolution on Governor Cuomo's 2011-2012 Budget Proposal**

February 8 of 2011

WHEREAS, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has proposed to cut aid to the State University of New York by \$135 million, and to the City University of New York (CUNY) by \$70 million;

WHEREAS, the proposed cuts follow two decades of systematic defunding of public higher education in New York state, such that the state now funds only 51 percent of SUNY operating costs, down from 75 percent twenty years ago;

WHEREAS, the proposed cuts come in the context of an all-out assault on public education, social services, and public-sector workers in New York state and around the country;

WHEREAS, the proposed cuts will directly harm graduate students, undergraduates, faculty, and staff throughout the SUNY system, and constitute an implicit attempt to further privatize public higher education by shifting operating costs from the state onto students, families, and workers;

WHEREAS, the state's fiscal crisis could be resolved within several years through measures like the closing of corporate tax loopholes, reductions in the salaries of high-level state officials and SUNY administrators, reductions in the luxuries provided to those same officials and administrators, and, most importantly, the adoption of common-sense taxation policies—namely, a tax on financial speculation and derivatives as recommended by Nobel laureate economists like Paul Krugman and the renewal of the temporary tax increase on incomes over \$300,000 passed by the state legislature in 2009, which as the Fiscal Policy Institute ([www.fiscalspolicy.org](http://www.fiscalspolicy.org)) observes, would alone deliver *\$6 billion* in extra revenue over the next two years;

WHEREAS, the wealthiest one percent of New Yorkers captures 35 percent of all income, therefore justifying a “chop-from-the-top” approach to state fiscal policy;

WHEREAS, the proposal to cut funding for public education and other services which benefit the general population reflects a deliberate choice on the part of Cuomo and others to target students and public-sector workers rather than the state's wealthiest residents, and thus amounts to a thinly-veiled form of class warfare;

WHEREAS, the federal government, which provides about one-third of the NY state budget, could save well over \$1 trillion each year by repealing Bush-era tax cuts on the wealthiest taxpayers and by reducing wasteful military expenditures—which constitute 48 percent of federal discretionary spending—and reallocating money to public education, health care, affordable housing, and the creation of green jobs;

WHEREAS, public investment in education, health care, infrastructure, and other services has been proven to be a far more effective means of stimulating economic growth than the alternative course of cutting taxes on the wealthy, and has been widely recommended by Nobel laureate economists like Joseph Stiglitz during the current economic recession;

Be it RESOLVED, that the Graduate Student Organization of the State University of New York at Stony Brook, condemns the proposed Cuomo budget as a transparent manifestation of elite class warfare against poor, working-class, and middle-class New Yorkers;

Be it further RESOLVED, that the GSO rejects, as false, the notion that “there is no alternative” to resolving the state fiscal crisis;

Be it further RESOLVED, that the GSO will only discuss tuition under the absolute condition that such an increase is matched by any and all tuition waiver and assistance programs (including those pertaining to graduate students), and only under the guarantee that any and all tuition funding is directly managed by the SUNY administration;

Be it further RESOLVED, that the GSO calls upon administrators of SUNY to lobby forcefully to restore SUNY funding, to accept voluntary temporary pay cuts of 30 percent; and to cease lobbying for legislation that would mandate perpetual tuition raises;

Be it further RESOLVED, that the GSO calls upon all New Yorkers, and particularly all students, faculty, and staff within the SUNY and CUNY systems, to resist the current budget proposal by all available means.