



MARCOS A. CRESPO
Assemblyman 85th District

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May 20, 2015

Andrew Cuomo
Governor
State of New York
Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Honorable John Flanagan
Majority Leader
New York State Senate
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12247

Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker.
New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248

Re: City University of New York Faculty and Staff Salary Increase Funding

Dear Governor Cuomo, Majority Leader Flanagan and Speaker Heastie:

I write to urge you to support a one-time investment of \$240 million to allow CUNY to provide salary increases to its faculty and professional staff for 2010 at the same level as the increases received by other New York State public employees. Your support for the one-time investment would allow the introduction of a paybill for CUNY this session. I also urge your support of legislation that would provide for a consistent level of State support for CUNY and SUNY, including funds for future collectively-bargained increases.

Both the one-time investment for CUNY and the ongoing support in the maintenance-of-effort bill are essential to protect the quality of education at CUNY and to resolve the contract for the 27,000 faculty and professional staff represented by the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY, who have not had a contract for nearly five years.

The continued lack of a contract puts educational quality at CUNY at risk, and endangers one of the state's most productive institutions—an institution that is of special importance to communities of color. We the members of the Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task submit this issue to you with our strongest expression of support.

CUNY is vital to the future of our state. The City University of New York enrolls nearly half a million students, and draws students from every Assembly and Senate district in the State of New York. Of CUNY undergraduates, 76% are people of color, and 38% are immigrants. CUNY includes one historically Black college—Medgar Evers College—and one Hispanic-serving college—Hostos Community College. The City University of New York is a lifeline for hundreds of thousands of New York State residents and their communities; for many New Yorkers, it represents the only option for a college education and the chance for a better life.

An educated workforce is the foundation of a strong economy. It is *the intellectual infrastructure* of the state—especially in the emerging knowledge-based economy. CUNY plays a unique role in creating this intellectual infrastructure—at every level from workforce development to top-ranked Ph.D. programs. The majority of CUNY graduates continue to live and work in New York State, where they earn over \$60 billion annually and make a substantial contribution to the state's tax-base and economic health.


But the quality of education at CUNY has been put at risk because of the need for retroactive pay to resolve the contract and the absence of maintenance-of-effort legislation that includes collective bargaining increases. Faculty salaries at CUNY are substantially below those at comparable institutions, and CUNY cannot compete in the national market for

academic talent. Top-quality professors are now reluctant to accept positions at CUNY; some of the University's prominent scholars have left, or are considering leaving, for positions at other colleges; and current faculty members are forced to choose between their commitment to the University and their responsibility to their own families. Ultimately, education suffers.

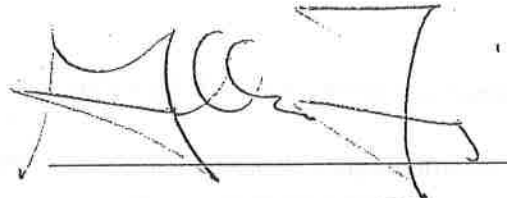
We believe that it would be dangerously shortsighted to undermine the quality of education at the country's largest urban university—an institution that enables working New Yorkers throughout the state to achieve their dreams. At a time when New York State is making important investments in the state's infrastructure, an investment in higher education is essential. As members of the Black, Puerto Rican and Asian Legislative Caucus, we feel a special urgency about maintaining the quality of education at the public university that empowers residents of poor communities and communities of color to contribute to this economy.

New York State is in a position to make the necessary investment in CUNY this year; we urge you to prioritize the one-time investment of \$240 million and to support and sign into law full maintenance-of-effort legislation. Doing so would be an investment in the future of the entire state.

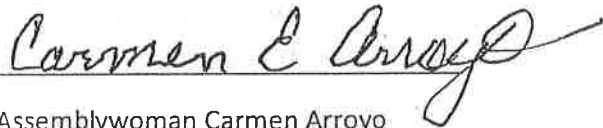
Sincerely,



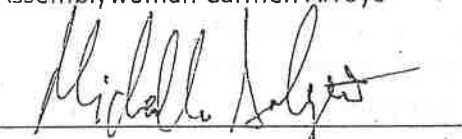
Assemblyman Marcos A. Crespo



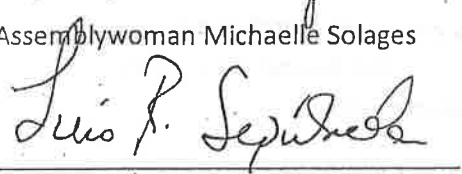
Assemblyman Guillermo Linares



Assemblywoman Carmen Arroyo



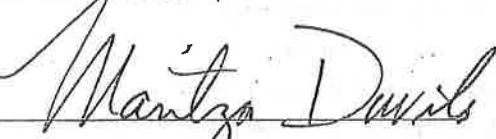
Assemblywoman Michaelle Solages



Assemblyman Luis Sepulveda



Assemblyman Philip Ramos



Assemblywoman Maritza Davila



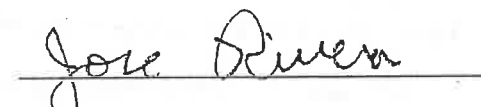
Assemblyman Victor Pichardo



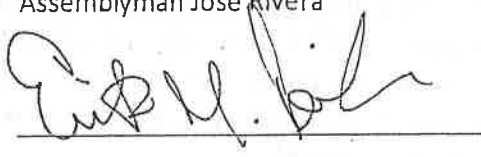
Assemblywoman Nily Rozic



Assemblyman Francisco Moya



Assemblyman Jose Rivera



Assemblyman Erik Dilan



Assemblyman Robert J. Rodriguez