



2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

The 2026 Legislative Session concluded on Friday, June 6th. This year's session provided very little time for the Legislature to address post-budget issues due to protracted state budget negotiations, which was finally enacted nearly two months after its April 1 deadline. The state budget and post-budget victories UUP secured during this legislative session are provided below.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Operating Aid: The enacted state budget includes a net increase of \$49.3 million in operating aid for SUNY state-operated campuses. With this increase, the state has provided a total recurring increase of \$440.3 million over the past four years.

Full-Time Faculty Support: The budget includes \$53 million to hire and retain full-time faculty.

Opportunity Programs: The budget provides \$13.26 million for the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), a \$10.66 million increase over last year's budget. Pre-Medical EOP is funded at \$1 million.

Hospitals: The enacted budget provides the following investments in SUNY's public teaching hospitals:

- State coverage of debt service costs
- \$100 million in operating aid for SUNY Downstate
- \$150 million in capital funding (\$50 million per hospital)
- \$750 million reappropriation of capital funding for the modernization of SUNY Downstate
- \$450 million reappropriation of capital funding for the modernization of SUNY Upstate

Capital Funding: The enacted budget provides \$795 million to SUNY for critical maintenance, an increase of \$245 million over last year. The budget includes an additional

\$100 million for renovations and new construction, as well as \$100 million for research facilities.

Tier 6 Reform: The state budget contains reforms to Tier 6 as follows:

- **NYSTRS (TRS) Members** – The retirement age will be reduced by five years, from 63 to 58, without penalties, for members with 30 years of service.
- **Optional Retirement Program (ORP) Members** – The state will provide an additional 1% contribution to ORP member accounts, and the employee contributions are adjusted to align with the New York State and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS) employee contributions.
- **NYSLRS (ERS) Members** – For members in this pension system, the employee contribution bands have been altered to reduce the amount individuals have to contribute towards their pension. The changes are in the chart below.

SALARY	OLD CONTRIBUTION	NEW CONTRIBUTION
\$0-\$45K	3%	3%
Over \$45K-\$55K	3.5%	3%
Over \$55K-\$75K	4.5%	3%
Over \$75K - \$100K	5.75%	4%
Over \$100K - \$125K	6%	5.25%
Over \$125K	6%	5.75%

- **Overtime** – For members eligible for overtime, the amount of pensionable overtime in all systems will increase. For members of ERS and TRS, the cap will increase from the current \$22,500 to \$30,000 and be indexed annually at 3%.

NYS Opportunity Promise Scholarship: The budget expanded this program that provides free associate degrees to students aged 25-55 in high-demand fields. The scholarship is extended to all SUNY campuses that grant associate degrees. \$4 million is provided to support the expansion.

Revenue: The current top corporate tax rates were extended for three years, maintaining approximately \$1.3 billion in annual revenue. Additionally, the budget decouples NYS from new federal tax breaks for corporations. This maintains about \$700 million in annual revenue.

POST-BUDGET LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Administrative Action

Comptroller's Administrative Reforms for Recovery of Overpayments

In direct response to legislation introduced by UUP, state Comptroller Tom DiNapoli issued an administrative fix for the recovery of overpayments process. New guidance from the Comptroller (State Agencies Bulletin 2413.1) establishes due process for employees who are subject to recovery of overpayments. The new policy requires the agency to notify the employee in writing of the alleged overpayment at least 4 weeks before recovery commences. The letter must include several items, including an explanation of the circumstance(s) that resulted in the overpayment and why recovery is permissible under law. Additionally, the letter must include the total amount of the overpayment and the overpayment recovery rate per pay period, which shall not exceed 10% of the employee's biweekly gross earnings, unless the employee requests so. The employee may request a lower recovery rate due to financial hardship. There is also an avenue for the employee to appeal on the overpayment recovery plan.

Bills Signed into Law by the Governor

UUP Pay Bill

S. 10648 (Stavisky) / A. 11570 (O'Pharrow)

This bill implements and provides funding for the first year of the tentative agreement between UUP and the State of New York. This funding is pursuant to a ratification vote.

Artificial Intelligence Labor Protections

S. 8831 (Gonzalez) / A. 9487 (Otis)

UUP introduced and won expanded AI labor protections for public employees in New York state. In December 2025, Governor Hochul signed legislation sponsored by Sen. Gonzalez and Assemblymember Otis that explicitly makes SUNY subject to the provisions of the Legislative Oversight of Automated Decision-making in Government (LOADinG) Act. Moreover, in February 2026, the Governor signed a chapter amendment to this act, in which UUP played an instrumental role. This new expanded law provides that use of AI shall not:

- affect existing collective bargaining rights or representation;
- result in an employee's discharge, displacement or loss of position; this includes partial displacement such as a reduction in the hours of non-overtime work, wages, or employment benefits;

- permit the transfer of duties and functions currently performed by UUP members to an AI system; or
- alter the rights, benefits or privileges of SUNY employees, including but not limited to terms and conditions of employment, civil service status, and collective bargaining unit membership status.

Additionally, UUP launched an [AI reporting form](#) that members can use to report any concerns about how AI tools are being used at your campus and if they are negatively impacting your work.

Safety Requirements for AI Models

S.8828 (Gouardes) / A.9449 (Bores)

This legislation is a chapter amendment to Chapter 625 of the Laws of 2025. This bill provides a regulatory regime for the training of artificial intelligence models and requires transparency for large frontier AI developers. It requires large AI developers to publish and update their safety plans and report potential catastrophic incidents to the state.

Prohibition of Employment Promissory Notes

S.8822 (May) / A.9452 (Steck)

This legislation prohibits employers from using promissory notes to make an employee repay education or training costs if they leave employment before a certain period.

Bills Passed by Both Houses

Ban on Impersonating Employee Organizations/Representatives

S.9577-A (Ramos) / A.10835-A (Griffin)

This bill prohibits falsely impersonating a public employee organization or public employee organization representative. It aims to protect both employees and the employee organization or representative from harm. Under this measure, the attorney general is authorized to seek relief from any individual or organization who is engaged in this unscrupulous activity, and civil penalties (\$1,000 per incident) may be assessed to any offenders.

This legislation will help protect UUP and other public employee unions from efforts by outside actors (e.g. the Freedom Foundation and others) to mislead employees through fraudulent or deceptive communications that falsely claim to come from a union or union representative. These communications may be verbal, written, or electronic, and can be designed to confuse our members, disrupt union operations, interfere with representation, or damage the credibility and effectiveness of the organization.

Prevents Outsourcing During a Hiring Freeze

S.4773 (Ryan) / A.1396 (Eachus)

This bill prohibits state agencies from contracting out services during a hiring freeze that would otherwise be performed by represented public employees.

Use of Leave During Waiting Period for Workers' Compensation

S.10350-A (Ramos) / A.1202-A (Simon)

This bill allows employees to utilize any of their accrued time during the waiting period for workers' compensation or during a controversion (dispute) of their claim. If it is subsequently determined that no waiting period is required or that the employee was entitled to benefits during the period of controversion, all time charged shall be restored.

Protections for Private Loan Borrowers and Cosigners

S.5598-B (May) / A.4922-C (Levenberg)

This legislation is in response to recent federal actions regarding student loans by establishing protections for borrowers and cosigners who take out private education loans.

The bill requires lenders to:

- provide clear information about cosigner release;
- respond to release applications within 30 days;
- cap payment requirements at 12 consecutive on-time payments; and
- automatically release cosigners who become totally and permanently disabled.

Moreover, the measure prohibits loan acceleration except for nonpayment and bans changes to loan terms when a cosigner dies or files for bankruptcy. It requires debt collectors to possess and provide detailed loan documentation before attempting collection, including proof of ownership and transaction history. The bill also creates enforcement mechanisms through AG and DFS enforcement.

Bills Passed by One House

The following bills passed either the Senate or Assembly only. These bills will need to be reintroduced by their sponsors next year as 2027 starts a new two-year legislative session cycle. UUP will continue to advocate for legislation that will benefit our members, and which aligns with our legislative agenda.

Transparency of SUNY Research Foundation and Campus Foundations – Passed Senate

S.6745 (Stavisky) / A.5733 (Hyndman)

This bill establishes reporting requirements for the SUNY Research Foundation and every campus foundation. UUP has supported this bill for several years, and we are pleased to report that it passed the Senate. The bill also made it out of the Assembly Higher Education Committee for the first time but did not reach a final vote by the full Assembly.

Mental Health Educational Opportunity Program (MHEOP) – Passed Senate

S.2046 (Webb)

This legislation establishes an educational opportunity program specifically for students pursuing degrees that will lead to careers in mental health, such as psychology, social work, and mental health counseling.

Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) Reform – Passed Senate

S.10098 Skoufis / A.10759 (Raga)

The FOIL law is a critical piece of government transparency legislation that allows the public to request records from state agencies. However, it can take months for agencies to respond to requests. This bill establishes maximum allowable time frames for agencies to respond to requests, improving the State's transparency and responsiveness to the public.

Local Input in Community Healthcare Act – Passed Senate

S.9388 (Rivera) / A.10736 (Simon)

This bill strengthens community engagement requirements for when a hospital seeks to close entirely or to close units that provide maternity, mental health, or substance use care. The requirements include advanced public notice, a public community forum, an impact assessment, and a revised closure plan based on community feedback.

Reporting on the Impact of Hospital Closures – Passed Senate

S.2633-A (Gonzalez)

This bill directs the Department of Health (DOH) to complete a report on the impact of hospital closures on healthcare access in the state. DOH shall use the data to define and identify areas at risk of future hospital closures, called "distressed healthcare zones," and prioritize them in future funding allocations.

Emergency Contraception in Vending Machines – Passed Senate

S.2058 (Webb) / A.9175 (Gonzalez-Rojas)

This legislation would require every SUNY campus to have at least one vending machine with emergency contraception available for purchase.

Training to Reduce Abusive Conduct and Bullying in the Workplace – Passed Senate

S.4925 (Ramos) / A.4936 (Bronson)

This bill requires public employers to conduct training on abusive conduct and bullying in the workplace and to establish reporting systems for such incidents.

Public Posting of Contracts – Passed Assembly

A.6707 (Solages)

This bill requires that a detailed summary of all state contracts exempted from the Comptroller's approval be publicly posted on the agency's website within 30 days. It would enhance government transparency and improve our ability to identify SUNY's contracts.

“Reportable Business Relationship” of SUNY and CUNY Employees – Passed Assembly

S.2047-A (Webb) / A.617-A (Shimsky)

This bill exempts SUNY and CUNY faculty and staff from the reportable business relationship disclosure requirements since they are not in policymaking roles.

Reforms to Audit of Medical Assistance Program Funds – Passed Senate

S.4955-B (Harckham) / A.1069-B (Paulin)

This bill provides due process to healthcare providers in the medical assistance program when they are under audit by the Office of the Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG). The bill seeks to reduce excessive recovery of overpayments by the OMIG that are based on technical errors, not deliberate fraud.