



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU
Governor

December 17, 2019

The Honorable Donna M. Soucy
State House, Room 302
107 North Main Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

The Honorable Steven J. Shurtleff
State House, Room 311
107 North Main Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Madam Speaker and Mr. President,

Tackling student debt has been a major priority for my Administration, which is why I was proud to include in my budget a \$16 million-per-year innovative student debt assistance and workforce recruitment program that would have cost New Hampshire taxpayers nothing. Students would have been able to become debt free after five years of living and working for a New Hampshire employer. All in all, it would have been the largest ever workforce incentive program of student loan assistance in state history.

As you recall during the budget process in the interest of time, we agreed not to include my plan in the negotiated budget agreement and instead, you made a commitment to sponsor it as a standalone piece of legislation. This was to allow for more time for discussion with legislators and ensure that it got a fair hearing on the merits as it went through the legislative process next year.

Several weeks ago, my office provided draft language for legislation in accordance with our agreement. We met with Senators and staff but to date, have not received firm details or a copy of the proposed legislation. I am becoming increasingly concerned that our agreement is off track and the legislation will fall short of providing meaningful, structural relief for our students. The goal is to provide real student debt relief while investing in New Hampshire's future workforce.

Over the past few years, investing in our students through innovative channels has been a priority. I proposed and the Legislature passed the Governor's Scholarship, which invests in students, not institutions. We increased aid to the University System to freeze tuition. While not nearly as much as I had originally proposed, the legislature ultimately agreed to and helped make modest investments into the nursing program at the University of New Hampshire. Much more can and should be done.

It is time to get serious about student debt. There is no excuse for taking half measures when we have the opportunity to take bold, historic action to tackle this issue. Included with this

letter is another copy of my proposal for student debt relief. It reflects the proposal put forward in my budget, while also ensuring that we are moving forward just as aggressively with student scholarships.

This proposal will deliver results for our students and families. Let's work together to get the job done.

Sincerely,



Christopher T. Sununu
Governor