

# *The Otsego County Chamber*

Strengthening Our Economy  Shaping Our Future

## *Media Release*

### *The Otsego County Chamber* **ENDORSES PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION EMPOWERMENT AND INNOVATION ACT**

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*The Otsego County Chamber* today offers its endorsement of the proposed Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act.

Chamber President & CEO Rob Robinson, working with SUNY Oneonta President Nancy Kleniewski and SUNY Delhi President Candace Vancko, stated the Chamber's support for the plan which would, among other things, remove the establishment of SUNY tuition rates from New York's political process and make it the responsibility of SUNY itself.

"College tuition is a huge financial burden for New York families." Robinson said. "Putting the decision process where it belongs will allow SUNY to set reasonable, measured tuition system that students and their families can plan for."

With the implementation of the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act, SUNY estimates that over the next ten years, its campuses will be able to help create over 10,000 new jobs and invest over \$8.5 billion in capital construction which will support over 43,700 direct and 21,800 indirect construction jobs.

In addition, each campus would be allowed to make programmatic decisions based on the needs of their own area and student population. Robinson referred to the need for the state colleges to be “community-based, not system-based” and offered the following reasons for the Chamber’s support of the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act:

1. Economic Development
2. Local Autonomy
3. Ability to respond to needs on the local level

Kleniewski and Vancko expressed their appreciation to the Chamber for its support of the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act.

Kleniewski said, “We are delighted to have the support of *The Otsego County Chamber* for the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act. The business leaders in our area clearly recognize the positive impact of a strong public university on the regional economy.”

Vancko added, “The Chamber’s support is a perfect example of how business and higher education can partner for the betterment of New York State.”