



LOWER HUDSON EDUCATION COALITION

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December 19, 2018

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12244

Re: S.7730, Murphy/A.9825, Galef

Provides that component school districts cannot impose a tax levy for their share of the board of cooperative educational services capital expenditures.

Dear Governor Cuomo,

The Lower Hudson Education Coalition (LHEC) supports the above referenced legislation and urges your approval.

This legislation would make a targeted adjustment to the property tax cap by counting certain BOCES capital costs the same way a school district's capital costs are counted. Under current law, only school districts can exclude their capital construction costs from their tax cap calculation. This exclusion does not include capital costs related to BOCES facilities, despite BOCES not receiving direct state aid, being able to levy taxes or directly receive Smart School Bond Act funds.

BOCES are an important resource to students and school districts across the state. Through the use of shared services and the consolidation of resources, BOCES help encourage efficiencies in funding, programming and administrative operations. They are a major provider of Career and Technical Education, Special Education and other vital programs and services.

In order for BOCES to expand their offerings to meet a growing need, they need resources to add to their footprint, update facilities and make security improvements. Since BOCES are unable to generate their own state aid, they are dependent upon their component districts to fund these projects. Not allowing BOCES capital expenses to be a part of a school district's capital exclusion has created a financial disincentive from investing in BOCES facilities. This would not be a mandate on school districts or BOCES, it would simply provide them a much-needed option as an increasing number of BOCES face space constraints.

In 2017 a similar bill to accomplish this goal was vetoed by the Governor. This updated legislation addresses the concerns cited by the Governor in his veto message, such as limiting this exclusion to BOCES capital projects directly approved by voters.

For these reasons and more, the Lower Hudson Education Coalition supports S.7730/A.9825 and urges your immediate approval.

Sincerely,

Members of the Lower Hudson Education Coalition

Cc: Senator Terrence Murphy
Assembly member Sandy Galef
Alphonso David
Dan Fuller
Terry Pratt
Jamie Frank