

**ANNA M. KAPLAN  
NYS SENATOR, 7<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT**

**CHAIR  
COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
AND SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

**COMMITTEES:  
ALCOHOLISM AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE  
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION  
JUDICIARY  
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTS  
TRANSPORTATION  
WOMEN'S ISSUES**



**THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK**

**ALBANY OFFICE:  
ROOM 805  
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BLDG.  
ALBANY, NY 12247  
(518) 455-2170**

**DISTRICT OFFICE:  
1 OLD COUNTRY ROAD  
SUITE 270  
CARLE PLACE, NY 11514  
(516) 746-5924**

**E-MAIL ADDRESS:  
kaplan@nysenate.gov**

**WEBSITE:  
kaplan.nysenate.gov**

February 19, 2021

Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins:  
Majority Leader  
New York State Senate  
LOB – Room 907  
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Leader Stewart-Cousins:

I respectfully request that the Senate reject Governor Cuomo's proposal to eliminate the New York State Centers of Excellence and consolidate them with the Centers for Advanced Technology. In addition, we ask the Senate to restore funding from the \$19 million in the Executive Budget proposal to last year's combined total of \$23,593,165 for the 29 Centers: \$10,631,785 for the Centers of Excellence (COEs) and \$12,961,380 for the Centers for Advanced Technology (CATs).

Currently, the 15 CATs and 14 COEs comprise a network of high-technology economic development centers based at universities throughout the state. Collaborating with these state supported assets provides companies of all sizes with access to expertise, technology and programs vital to the growth of their businesses in New York. Thanks to these 29 Centers, we have commercialized new products, improved manufacturing processes, brought new drugs to market, identified areas of growth potential for further investment, and much more.

The Centers of Excellence were initially created in the 2002-2003 state budget, then later solidified into statute in 2011 with legislation (A.6320-C/Lupardo) that passed both the Assembly and Senate unanimously before being signed into law by Governor Cuomo (Ch. 162 of 2011). However, Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget proposal would now repeal that law and eliminate the Center of Excellence program.

In the last 3 years (2017-2019 ESD annual reports), the CATs and COEs have helped create and retain 9,816 jobs and generate \$2.57 billion in economic impact. In 2020, the Centers collaborated on more than 81 COVID-related projects, including testing, PPE, HVAC and therapeutics. And as we rebuild New York's economy in the wake of the global pandemic, the strategic locations and unique strengths of each CAT and COE gives every region across the state a foundation for growth, helping build New York companies, while also building our economy back in a better and more equitable fashion.

The proposed cut and consolidation of the CATs and COEs would heavily impede the economic growth these Centers generate by weakening investment in academic-industry collaborations, including commercialization and workforce development. Decreased state support will also limit efforts to leverage and attract added funding through corporate sponsored research and federal grants, such as the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) funding.

Page 2  
February 19, 2021

I believe that rejecting the governor's consolidation proposal and restoring the funding Centers for Advanced Technology and the Centers of Excellence and the Centers of Excellence will help the Centers continue the valuable support and services they provide to New York State businesses. I greatly appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anna M. Kaplan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

---

Anna M. Kaplan  
State Senator, 7<sup>th</sup> District

cc: Senator Liz Krueger, Chair, Finance Committee  
Shontell Smith, Majority Conference Chief of Staff & Counsel  
David Friedfel, Secretary, Senate Finance Committee