



STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 27, 2017

The Roosevelt Institute at Binghamton University is committed to including students in the policy process and challenging our local officials and administration to engage with our generation. Inspired by the Roosevelt Network's national Next Generation Blueprint, we published the *first* student-led policy agenda in Broome County's history. While developing the Binghamton Blueprint, we did extensive outreach and spoke with hundreds of students, faculty, administrators, and community organizations to develop a survey and policy solutions that addressed Broome County's most important issues. Since the publication of the Blueprint, we have received widespread support for increasing student engagement in local government and have successfully brought student voices to the table.

After conversations with students and community members, safety was identified as one of the largest issues affecting Broome County's citizens. To help address this issue, we developed policies designed to improve the safety of students and community members alike. One of these was a proposal to implement a blue-light callbox pilot program off-campus.

However, in light of recent events, we have chosen to stand in solidarity with communities who have been marginalized, and we are removing our support from the initiative. The Roosevelt Institute did not meet with Mayor David about the blue-light policy prior to his State of the City announcement and at no point in our proposal did we mention, much less suggest the use of, University Impact Aid. The University is giving the city \$200,000 per year for five years in Impact Aid, but the blue lights are not necessarily the only initiative funded by the program. Our cost estimates, which were based upon consultations with experts in the field, did not even approach that amount.

To further Roosevelt Institute's vision of rewriting our social and economic rules to work for everyone in Broome County, we believe that the Impact Aid should be spent on other projects which address safety and community development. This funding, which the City of Binghamton very much needs due to proposed cuts to CDBG funds, can be spent on combatting poverty by opening low-cost food cooperatives in food deserts in the Northside and First Ward, creating an inpatient heroin detox center in Broome County, and expanding mentorship opportunities in local schools, all of which are addressed in the Binghamton Blueprint.

At the Roosevelt Institute, we believe that students and the University should be important drivers of change in the community. The Blueprint policies are part of our vision for progressive change and include revitalizing the economy with entrepreneurship grants, ensuring economic equality with cooperatives, and empowering youth to have a voice in the policy process. Since writing the Blueprint, we have been working with community organizations such as the United Way of Broome County, CHOW, VINES, and the Binghamton Regional Sustainability Coalition to make our community a better place. As a progressive policy organization, we advocate for policies but understand that accomplishing our goals requires cooperation between key stakeholders and decision-makers. While we will no longer be supporting the blue-light system, we urge the University to consider other initiatives that address community safety and we look forward to pursuing a community vision that better reflects our collective values.