To the Rockefeller Institute of Government,

I write to you as a nonpublic school parent, perhaps not the stakeholder one would expect when requesting feedback regarding Foundation Aid designed to fund public schools.

Yet, this expected omission is precisely the issue I write to you about.

The Foundation Aid formula does not account for nonpublic school students at all. While this may have negligible impacts in some areas, in places like the East Ramapo Central School District, where 3/4 of students attend nonpublic school, this oversight has serious repercussions. The district must provide certain services to nonpublic school children yet receives no Foundation Aid to provide them.

This all but guarantees a fiscal deficit, pitting public school parents against nonpublic school parents, all vying for a share of an impossibly small pie, destroying communities. As a Jewish parent, I feel the hostility caused by this deficit; its strife has endured for decades and has exacerbated antisemitism against our community.

There are other issues with the Foundation Aid formula. It relies on U.S. Census data from the year 2000. While the use of dated information likely distorts the funding picture statewide, certain districts, like East Ramapo, have changed dramatically in the last quarter century. East Ramapo has grown significantly since the year 2000. Qualitatively, it has changed as well, and now includes large numbers of English language learners in public school. These students require, and are entitled to, additional services, further straining an already financially strapped district operating under a bygone Foundation Aid formula representative of a different population.

Thank you for researching this issue so that districts like East Ramapo are not shortchanged.

While my child attends nonpublic school, I believe that all children, whether they attend public or nonpublic school, should have the resources necessary to succeed. Please update the Foundation Aid formula accordingly.

Sincerely,

Anita Mayer