STATE OF NEW YORK

10204

IN ASSEMBLY

February 12, 2026

Introduced by M. of A. EACHUS, MAHER -- read once and referred to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to appointing representatives of community colleges to the board of trustees of the state university of New York and authorizing counties to appoint members to boards of trustees of community colleges when certain members have not been appointed in a timely manner

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "community college representation act".

§ 2. Legislative findings and justification. The State University of New York (SUNY) system includes 30 community colleges serving more than 44% of its total student population. These institutions are not only foundational to SUNY's academic mission, but they are also key drivers of regional workforce development, upstate economic revitalization, and closing persistent equity gaps in higher education.

Despite their critical role, community colleges currently have no voting representation on the SUNY Board of Trustees. Their faculty, presidents, and trustees contribute directly to the success of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, yet they have no formal vote in system-level policy or budget decisions. By contrast, SUNY's four-year campuses are well represented in both formal and informal governance channels.

This bill is not about expanding representation for every SUNY affiliated stakeholder group. It is about recognizing the singular role of community colleges, which serve the largest segment of SUNY students and operate under a distinct funding and governance structure. Their inclusion is essential to balanced and informed system-wide governance. Further, these positions shall be uncompensated, in alignment with existing trustee practice, and shall impose no fiscal burden on the State or SUNY.

§ 3. Subdivision 1 of section 353 of the education law, as amended by chapter 268 of the laws of 2011, is amended to read as follows:

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD14092-02-6

1. The state university shall be governed, and all of its corporate powers exercised, by a board of trustees. Such board shall consist of [~~eighteen~~] twenty-one members, fifteen of whom shall be appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate, one of whom shall be appointed by the New York community college trustees' association, one of whom shall be appointed by the New York community college association of presidents, one of whom shall be appointed by the faculty council of community colleges, one of whom shall be the president of the student assembly of the state university, ex-officio and voting, one of whom shall be the president of the university faculty senate, ex-officio and non-voting, and one of whom shall be the president of the faculty council of community colleges, ex-officio and non-voting. Such ex-officio members shall be subject to every provision of any general, special, or local law, ordinance, charter, code, rule, or regulation applying to the voting members of such board with respect to the discharge of their duties, including, but not limited to, those provisions setting forth codes of ethics, disclosure requirements, and prohibiting business and professional activities. One member of the board shall be designated by the governor as chairperson and one as vice-chairperson. Of the members first appointed, two shall be appointed for a term which shall expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred fifty-two; one for a term which shall expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred fifty-three; two for a term which shall expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred fifty-four; one for a term which shall expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred fifty-five; two for a term which shall expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred fifty-six; one for a term which shall expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred fifty-seven; two for a term which shall expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred fifty-eight; one for a term which shall expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred fifty-nine; two for a term which shall expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred sixty; and one for a term which shall expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred sixty-one. Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as original appointments. The term of office of each trustee appointed on or after April first, nineteen hundred eighty-six shall be seven years, except those of the student member and the faculty members; provided, however, that the term of office of each trustee appointed as a voting member by the New York community college trustees' association, the New York community college association of presidents, and the faculty council of community colleges shall be three years and such trustees may be reappointed by their respective appointing organization. In the event of a vacancy of a term appointed by the New York community college trustees' association, the New York community college association of presidents, or the faculty council of community colleges, the respective appointing organization shall appoint a new member within sixty days of such vacancy to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment. Trustees shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for their expenses actually and necessarily incurred by them in the performance of their duties under this article.

§ 4. (a) The New York community college trustees' association, the New York community college association of presidents, and the faculty council of community colleges shall each develop and publicly disclose a transparent and democratically accountable process by which its appointee to the SUNY board of trustees is selected. Such process shall ensure that each appointee has broad legitimacy and is accountable to their respective constituency and therefore such process shall include, but

need not be limited to: (i) notification of the full membership of the respective appointing organization; (ii) a nomination period with reasonable eligibility criteria; and (iii) a clear and verifiable voting procedure.

(b) The New York community college trustees' association, the New York community college association of presidents, and the faculty council of community colleges shall each appoint their respective member to the SUNY board of trustees within ninety days of the effective date of this act and such members shall be sworn in as full voting members of the SUNY board of trustees at or prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board of trustees.

(c) Each appointee to the SUNY board of trustees appointed in accordance with this section shall issue an annual report to their respective appointing organization which shall provide detailed information regarding actions and policies impacting community colleges that have been taken by the SUNY board of trustees.

§ 5. Section 6306 of the education law is amended by adding a new subdivision 12 to read as follows:

12. In the case that the governor fails to appoint a trustee within one hundred eighty days of a vacancy on a board of trustees of a community college, the local legislative body or board of the county in which such community college is located, or other appropriate governing agency, shall be authorized to appoint a trustee to fill such vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment.

§ 6. This act shall take effect immediately.