

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:

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

3 § 2. Legislative findings and justification. The State University of
4 New York (SUNY) system includes 30 community colleges serving more than
5 44% of its total student population. These institutions are not only
6 foundational to SUNY's academic mission, but they are also key drivers
7 of regional workforce development, upstate economic revitalization, and
8 closing persistent equity gaps in higher education.

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

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

23 § 3. Subdivision 1 of section 353 of the education law, as amended by
24 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.

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1 1. The state university shall be governed, and all of its corporate
2 powers exercised, by a board of trustees. Such board shall consist of
3 [~~eighteen~~] twenty-one members, fifteen of whom shall be appointed by the
4 governor with the advice and consent of the senate, one of whom shall be
5 appointed by the New York community college trustees' association, one
6 of whom shall be appointed by the New York community college association
7 of presidents, one of whom shall be appointed by the faculty council of
8 community colleges, one of whom shall be the president of the student
9 assembly of the state university, ex-officio and voting, one of whom
10 shall be the president of the university faculty senate, ex-officio and
11 non-voting, and one of whom shall be the president of the faculty coun-
12 cil of community colleges, ex-officio and non-voting. Such ex-officio
13 members shall be subject to every provision of any general, special, or
14 local law, ordinance, charter, code, rule, or regulation applying to the
15 voting members of such board with respect to the discharge of their
16 duties, including, but not limited to, those provisions setting forth
17 codes of ethics, disclosure requirements, and prohibiting business and
18 professional activities. One member of the board shall be designated by
19 the governor as chairperson and one as vice-chairperson. Of the members
20 first appointed, two shall be appointed for a term which shall expire on
21 June thirtieth, nineteen hundred fifty-two; one for a term which shall
22 expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred fifty-three; two for a term
23 which shall expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred fifty-four; one
24 for a term which shall expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred
25 fifty-five; two for a term which shall expire on June thirtieth, nine-
26 teen hundred fifty-six; one for a term which shall expire on June thir-
27 tieth, nineteen hundred fifty-seven; two for a term which shall expire
28 on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred fifty-eight; one for a term which
29 shall expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred fifty-nine; two for a
30 term which shall expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred sixty; and
31 one for a term which shall expire on June thirtieth, nineteen hundred
32 sixty-one. Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same
33 manner as original appointments. The term of office of each trustee
34 appointed on or after April first, nineteen hundred eighty-six shall be
35 seven years, except those of the student member and the faculty members;
36 provided, however, that the term of office of each trustee appointed as
37 a voting member by the New York community college trustees' association,
38 the New York community college association of presidents, and the facul-
39 ty council of community colleges shall be three years and such trustees
40 may be reappointed by their respective appointing organization. In the
41 event of a vacancy of a term appointed by the New York community college
42 trustees' association, the New York community college association of
43 presidents, or the faculty council of community colleges, the respective
44 appointing organization shall appoint a new member within sixty days of
45 such vacancy to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term in the
46 same manner as the original appointment. Trustees shall receive no
47 compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for their
48 expenses actually and necessarily incurred by them in the performance of
49 their duties under this article.

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

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

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

12 (c) Each appointee to the SUNY board of trustees appointed in accord-
13 ance with this section shall issue an annual report to their respective
14 appointing organization which shall provide detailed information regard-
15 ing actions and policies impacting community colleges that have been
16 taken by the SUNY board of trustees.

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

19 12. In the case that the governor fails to appoint a trustee within
20 one hundred eighty days of a vacancy on a board of trustees of a commu-
21 nity college, the local legislative body or board of the county in which
22 such community college is located, or other appropriate governing agen-
23 cy, shall be authorized to appoint a trustee to fill such vacancy for
24 the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original
25 appointment.

26 § 6. This act shall take effect immediately.