

# STATE OF NEW YORK

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9218

## IN SENATE

February 17, 2026

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Introduced by Sen. SKOUFIS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed 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 affiliated  
16 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 inclusion  
19 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.

LBD14092-02-6

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.