



## NEW YORK STATE SENATE DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

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### **Senate Majority Advances Legislation to Improve Teacher Diversity in New York Schools**

**(Albany, NY)** The Senate Democratic Majority passed legislation to improve the diversity of New York’s teachers and encourage better representation across all demographics. This legislation will establish the Grow Your Own Initiative to attract underrepresented teachers into school districts; create a task force to study the impacts of these discrepancies and recommend solutions; develop recruitment programs to find and retain minority and bilingual educators, and establish statewide conventions for underrepresented educators to gather, network, and problem solve together.

“Many of us have an educator to thank for where we are in life, and many of us saw the possibilities on our horizons thanks to an educator who looked like us,” **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said. “Having representation from an early age not only serves as important role modeling but also greatly improves classroom connectivity and learning outcomes. Balancing the diversity of our teachers is a crucial step in furthering New York’s educational reforms and helps ensure that our school systems are truly built for everyone. I thank the bill sponsors and committee chairs for their commitment to this issue and advancing this critical legislation.”

**Chair of the Senate Committee on NYC Education and Bill Sponsor, Senator John Liu** said, “Our students’ educators should reflect the diversity of our student body, and Grow Your Own programs offer a proven approach to both recruiting good teachers and promoting an environment that cultivates better ideas, better outcomes, and brighter futures for all. If we are to truly ensure our schools are representative of the school population, we should always look to provide diverse, culturally responsive, community-based educators of color in order to best advance achievement for all students.”

**Chair of the Senate Education Committee, Senator Shelley B. Mayer**, said, “Our students benefit when their teachers bring unique perspectives to the classroom and are representative of the entire New York State community. I am proud to join my colleagues in passing this legislation to strengthen our schools by expanding diversity amongst our educators.”

**Bill Sponsor Senator Jabari Brisport** said, “From Kindergarten through my senior year of high school, I had a total of just one Black male teacher. When I became a public school teacher myself, I learned that only 2% of teachers nationwide are Black men, but true racial equity in our schools can only happen with a diverse pool of educators. Having a teacher who looks like them can have a big impact on educational outcomes for Black and Brown students, and they each deserve that opportunity. We must proactively develop strategies to open the door for more people of color to become teachers and to be supported once they do. I’m grateful to my predecessor, Sen. Montgomery, who originated the Task Force on Educator Diversity bill that passed the New York State Senate today.”

**Bill Sponsor Senator Robert Jackson** said, “New York has a teacher diversity problem. Teachers from underrepresented racial or ethnic groups can feel isolated, making it challenging to do their job well. The percentage of educators of color has been stubbornly stagnant even as a growing body of research shows a diverse teacher workforce positively affects the entire student body. This disparity puts a burden on those teachers not only to support students of color who look to them as leaders and role models, but it also can leave them feeling unsupported among colleagues.” Senator Jackson added, “Passing legislation to improve teacher diversity in New York schools like my bill S1984, directs resources to provide better education to the diverse children of New York State. I’m proud to be part of a senate majority committed to this issue, taking action to advance such a vital package of legislation.”

**Bill Sponsor Kevin Parker** said, "As diverse as our state is, the fact that our teaching staff does not adequately reflect the linguistic diversity of our students is a major shortfall. We know that language barriers are one the greatest hindrances to a student's success, and can make young learners feel ostracized within their own communities. My bill to establish the The Bilingual Teachers of Tomorrow Program would directly address this discrepancy, and ensure that New York schools are equipped to connect with students of all backgrounds. This legislation will allow students to better connect with their teachers and retain information as it relates to their studies”

**Bill Sponsor Senator Roxanne J. Persaud** said, “Nearly a quarter of a million public school teachers enter classrooms across New York State to make a difference in a young person’s life by preparing them for post-secondary education or vocational programs. Education is a powerful equalizer; however, only twenty percent of New York’s teachers come from Communities of Color and other underrepresented demographics. S. 342 will help attract and retain more educators who reflect the communities and share experiences like their students.”

The legislation passed by the Senate Democratic Majority includes:

- **Grow Your Own Initiative:** This legislation, Senate Bill [S1100A](#), sponsored by Senator John Liu, develops grow your own initiatives at school districts, boards of cooperative educational services and higher education institutions to attract underrepresented candidates into the teaching profession.
- **Task Force on Educator Diversity:** This legislation, Senate Bill [S2555A](#), sponsored by Senator Jabari Brisport, establishes a task force on educator diversity in New York state to conduct a study on the state of diversity among educators in New York, and devise strategies to promote better diversity going forward.

- **The Underrepresented Teachers of Tomorrow Program:** This legislation, Senate Bill [S342](#), sponsored by Senator Roxanne Persaud, establishes the underrepresented teachers of tomorrow teacher recruitment and retention program, which would provide awards designed to attract and retain educators from underrepresented demographics.
- **The Bilingual Teachers of Tomorrow Program:** This legislation, Senate Bill [S5433](#), sponsored by Senator Kevin Parker, establishes the bilingual teachers of tomorrow teacher recruitment and retention program to attract and retain bilingual, certified teachers in areas of greatest need.
- **Diversity and Empowerment Convention:** This legislation, Senate Bill [S1984](#), sponsored by Senator Robert Jackson, will direct the commissioner to convene statewide and regional conventions to bring together underrepresented educators annually to discuss experiences and best practices, as well as allow for networking, mentorship opportunities, and support.

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