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## NEW YORK STATE SENATE DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

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# Senate Majority to Advance Legislation that Continues to Fight for Education Diversity

(Albany, NY) Today, the Senate Democratic Majority will continue to fight for education diversity in our schools by passing legislation to encourage better representation across all demographics. This legislation will establish the Teachers and Educators Aiding the Communities They Call Home (TEACH) Act 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.

“Educators are often some of the first role models we have, and are influential in helping young people shape their hopes and dreams. But that can only happen if we can see ourselves in our teachers,” Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said. “Having representation from an early age vastly improves learning outcomes, closes educational gaps, and shows students that anything is possible. Balancing the diversity of our teachers is a crucial step in furthering New York’s educational reforms and helps keep our learning institutions as inclusive as possible. I thank the bill sponsors and committee chairs for their commitment to this issue and advancing this critical legislation.”

Chair of the Senate Education Committee, Senator Shelley B. Mayer said “The legislation passed today will make our schools stronger and more representative of New York. Diverse perspectives and increased representation amongst our educators will benefit all our students by broadening perspectives and experience for every student. I am proud to join my colleagues in passing this expansive package that will be so beneficial to schools, educators and students throughout our State. Thank you to Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and my colleagues for your commitment to diversity and equity - today we move that agenda forward.”

The legislation being passed by the Senate Democratic Majority includes:

- **Teachers and Educators Aiding the Communities They Call Home (TEACH) Act:** This legislation, [Senate Bill S2140A](#), 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 S3385A](#), 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 S1192](#), 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 S3408](#), 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 S1988](#), 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.
- **Strengthening the Amistad Commission:** [Senate Bill S1032](#), sponsored by Senator Robert Jackson, authorizes the Commissioner of Education to lead the Amistad Commission, instead of the secretary of state and expands the duties of such Commission. The Amistad Commission was established by the Legislature in 2005 to review state curriculum pertaining to the slave trade.

**Senator John Liu, Chair of the Senate Committee on NYC Education and Bill Sponsor,** 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.”

**Bill Sponsor Senator Jabari Brisport** said, “As a Black boy, I had a total of just one Black male teacher my entire time from kindergarten through high school. When I became a teacher myself, I learned that just 2% of teachers nationwide are Black men. We know that when BIPOC students have teachers who look like them it improves educational outcomes, and we also know that time alone is not resolving the lack of diversity in our education workforce. We must proactively develop strategies to open the door for more people of color to become teachers and to be supported once they do.”

**Bill Sponsor Senator Robert Jackson** said, "We have a responsibility to ensure that our teachers reflect the diversity of the students they serve, which is why I am committed to

addressing New York's teacher diversity problem. There is a burden on teachers of color to support students of color who look to them as leaders and role models, and this disparity can leave them feeling unsupported among peers. Passing legislation like my bill S1988 is a step in the right direction as it will allocate resources to ensure all children in New York State receive a quality education. I am proud to be part of a senate majority committed to this issue."

**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, "Education is a powerful equalizer, and there are more than 250,000 public school teachers working each day with the next generation of New York State's leaders. Studies have shown that students better identify with teachers with shared experiences that reflect the communities they serve. S. 1192 will help ensure that the percentage of teachers from Communities of Color, currently only twenty percent, will continue to increase."

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