



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

Senator Maziarz advances effort to reform Regents selection process

GEORGE D. MAZIARZ March 13, 2014

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Senator George Maziarz (R-C, Newfane) is pleased to announce that today the Senate approved legislation (S.2031-A) to change how members of the New York State Board of Regents are selected. The 17-member Board of Regents is responsible for supervising educational activities in the state, including the public education system and the SUNY system.

Currently, all members of the Board of Regents are elected by the members of the Senate and Assembly gathered in a joint legislative session. However, due to the fact that there are 150 assembly members and only 63 senators, the entire interview, nomination, and voting process is controlled by the Assembly leadership.

“A better process will produce a better outcome,” Senator Maziarz said. “As I said earlier this week, having Speaker Silver perennially control this process is wrong and it prevents rank and file legislators from holding the Regents accountable.”

Senator Maziarz pointed to the recent Regents vote held earlier this week as proof of why the outdated system needs to be reformed. Despite loud public outcries against the Regents for their mishandling of the implementation of Common Core, all three incumbents whose terms were expiring were re-elected on Tuesday, March 11.

Under the Senate bill approved today, beginning next year the Regents would no longer be chosen by a vote of the Legislature in joint session. Instead, a new process would be phased in over the next five years whereby Regents would be appointed by the Governor and the caucuses in the respective legislative chambers. In the end, eight Regents would be appointed by the Governor, three by the Senate Majority Leader, three by the Assembly Speaker, one by the Senate Minority Leader, and one by the Assembly Minority Leader. One last seat would rotate between the Governor, Senate Majority Leader, and Assembly Speaker.

“Appointments are how we select members to serve on virtually every other government panel in the state,” Senator Maziarz said. “Having a well-defined appointments process ensures that different views and different constituencies are fairly represented. That is not happening now on the Board of Regents because of how the process is completely controlled by the Assembly downstate leadership.”

The bill will be sent to the Assembly.

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