



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

Senator LaValle's Legislation To Reform NYS Board of Regents Selection and Increase Transparency of Education Policy Actions Passes Senate

KENNETH P. LAVALLE March 8, 2016



March 7, 2016 - Senator Ken LaValle, the Senate's Higher Education Committee Chairman, announced that the Senate passed legislation that reforms the selection process for the Board of Regents and increases transparency to help parents and educators have more access to proceedings that help set state education policy.

Senator LaValle said, “I have long advocated for more fairness and transparency relative to the Board of Regents. My bill will result in a more equitable approach in the process by which Regents are selected to ensure members are well-rounded representatives of the diverse policy areas that the board oversees.”

Senator LaValle’s legislation (S6854) would establish a more equitable and balanced appointment process for the selection of Regents that would require input from both houses of the Legislature. The Board of Regents is made up of seventeen members who are charged with setting state education policy for students and education professionals. The existing selection of Regents requires confirmation by a majority vote of all 213 members of the Legislature, giving the Assembly’s Democrat majority virtual control over the selection of Regents. Senator LaValle’s bill changes the selection process to help better reflect the population of the entire state. It would require a concurrent resolution from both houses of the Legislature to select the Regents, ensuring the Senate and the Assembly have an equal say in electing members to the board.

Another bill of Senator LaValle’s that passed the Senate (S224) would require more information about any Board of Regents resolutions that alter or amend the rules or regulations. Details would need to be provided about: those entities that are expected to be affected by increase in costs proposed; source of income to pay for increases, whether it be from the general fund or other funds; type of tax increase necessary to fund proposal; if a tax increase is to come from local property taxes, list expected increase by school district; and if a combination of funds are to be used, information regarding costs shall be provided by the Regents.

“Too often the Board imposes mandates on our schools causing increased expenses, which in

many instances are passed on to taxpayers,” Senator LaValle said. “The Board of Regents must be more open and fair when establishing new rules and procedures that force local school districts to incur new costs. My legislation will require that the Board of Regents engage in open dialog when they consider changes. The four bills that we passed today will ensure that the public is well-informed and the actions of the Board of Regents are more transparent.”

The Senate today also passed two other bills supported by Senator LaValle relating to the Board of Regents:

- S1796B requires that each meeting of the Board of Regents be streamed live and made available to the public. Currently, the Board only webcasts a small portion of its monthly meetings. This bill would give parents and educators the ability to stay informed of the Board's decisions; and
- S6503 requires the Board of Regents to give notice of their agenda several days before a scheduled meeting to allow the stakeholders on several educational issues the appropriate time to respond and discuss the issues. This would encourage more involvement from the public and would foster an improved dialogue between both the Board of Regents and other stakeholders in education.

The bills have been transferred to the Assembly for consideration.

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