



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

Sanders Votes Against SUNY Trustees Citing Diversity Concerns

JAMES SANDERS JR. June 17, 2016



State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village) yesterday voted against confirming new trustees for the State University of New York (SUNY) citing concerns about a lack of diversity within the group and across New York State authorities.

While Sanders believes the new appointees are highly qualified and wishes them the best, he could not in good conscience perpetuate a system that excludes people of color, whether deliberately or unintentionally.

Presently the SUNY board of trustees is comprised of 17 members – 14 white men, 2 black

men, 1 white woman, and 1 Cuban woman. The members are appointed by the governor, with the consent of the senate. This year's nominations are: Robert Duffy, Courtney Burke and Edward Spiro, all of whom are Caucasian. They were confirmed by the senate despite the opposition.

Sanders cited information distributed by the New York State Assembly Puerto Rican and Hispanic Task Force, which highlighted data showing the lack of diversity among New York State Authorities. In a 2015 survey of 451 board members from 43 state authorities, 87.3 percent were white, 6 percent were black, 4 percent were Hispanic and 2 percent were Asian. As of the 2010 census, New York State has a population of *19,378,102 people*, 12,740,974 (65.7%) white and 3,073,800 (15.9%) black.

“Our great university system should have representation as diverse as our great state,” Sanders said. “When we look at the numbers, something doesn’t add up. There are striking discrepancies between the demographics of our state and its representation in state authorities. We can, and should, do better.”