



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

## Jacobs Announces Approval of Community College-Economic Development Bill

SENATOR JACOBS March 23, 2017

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(Albany, NY) - New York State Senator Chris Jacobs (60<sup>th</sup> SD), today announced the passage by the full Senate of a bill he sponsored (S2103) calling for better alignment between community college boards of trustees, regional community college councils, curriculum development, and industry needs.

“My legislation passed today will require that regional SUNY Community College Councils consult with the both the Department of Labor and regional businesses before making recommendations to community college boards of trustees on ways to improve degree and certificate programs,” said Senator Jacobs. “Using these methods and input will enable our community colleges to better structure their programs and curriculum, ensuring we are meeting future workforce needs and improving post-graduation student employment,” the Senator added.

The impetus behind Jacobs introducing the bill is that employment opportunities, particularly manufacturing jobs, continue to go unfilled due to skills gaps in our workforce. State agencies like the Department of Labor and Empire State Development estimate that

approximately 16,000 manufacturing jobs remain unfilled in the region, in large part due to the skills gaps.

Senator Jacobs said he believes the disconnect that exists between industry's rapidly changing needs and our educational institutions must be bridged to begin closing these gaps. Ensuring better alignment, collaboration and focus among stakeholders is a good first step in addressing the problem.

"Tackling our workforce development challenges is critical to ensuring the regional economic resurgence we are experiencing in Buffalo and Western New York continues," said Jacobs.

"As a long time education advocate who has made economic development a priority, I appreciate what an economic driver our community colleges are, and the importance of them working more closely with private industry," Jacobs concluded.