



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

Mayer, Otis Pass Legislation Requiring Schools to Provide Student Government

SHELLEY B. MAYER June 14, 2023

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(Albany, NY) New York State Senator Shelley B. Mayer and Assemblyman Steve Otis announce that their legislation, which would require school districts to provide students with the opportunity to participate in student government while in high school, passed the Assembly on June 1st, preceded by its passage in the Senate on March 13th. The bills passed overwhelmingly, with bi-partisan support in both houses.

[S.1732/A.6091](#) will enhance the high school student experience, give young people a voice in school governance, and help build habits of civic participation. For many high school students, student government is their first experience participating in democracy, and serving as a voter, advocate, or elected leader. Students can gain real life skills by participating in student government and learn hands-on how government functions and how they can shape their community. Participating in student government prepares students to be active citizens in their communities throughout their lives. [Research has found](#) that students who directly participate in school governance programs have higher rates of academic success and civic engagement in adulthood.

Senator Shelley B. Mayer said, “Student government is a tremendous opportunity for young adults to have a direct experience with representational democracy. It is a pivotal chance to encourage civic participation. We must ensure we are lifting up every student and helping them understand that their voice matters, and they have the right - as well as the obligation- to participate in our democracy. I want to thank Assemblyman Otis for his partnership on this legislation and look forward to Governor Hochul’s signature on the bill.”

Assemblyman Steve Otis said, “Democracy is not just a form of government; it also requires the learned skills of deliberation, cooperation, compromise, and the ability to listen carefully and respect the views of others. One place we learn these skills is through student government where participants learn to engage with each other and with the school administration. Senator Mayer and I know the importance of these skills in our work in state government. This legislation will ensure that the opportunity for this important civics lesson is available in every high school throughout the state.”

This bill will require the board of education or trustees of every public school district serving students in grades nine through twelve, without a district wide or school building peer selected student government, to establish at least one student government organization in the district or school building.