



---

## NEW YORK STATE SENATE DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

---

For Immediate Release: February 5, 2024

Contact: Jonathan Heppner | heppner@nysenate.gov | 518-455-2415

# Senate Majority Advances Legislation that Continues to Fight for Education Diversity

(Albany, NY) Today, the Senate Democratic Majority continued to fight for education diversity in our schools by passing legislation to encourage better representation across all demographics. This legislation will create a task force to study the impacts of these discrepancies and recommend solutions; develop recruitment programs to find and retain minority and bilingual educators, and establish statewide conventions for underrepresented educators to gather, network, and problem solve together.

“Having representation from an early age vastly improves learning outcomes, closes educational gaps, and shows students that anything is possible,” Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said. “By fostering an environment that mirrors the rich tapestry of our communities, we help keep our learning institutions as inclusive as possible and empower our students to celebrate our differences and thrive beyond the classroom.”

The legislation passed by the Senate Democratic Majority includes:

- **Task Force on Educator Diversity:** This legislation, Senate Bill [S3385A](#), sponsored by Senator Jabari Brisport, establishes a task force on educator diversity in New York state to conduct a study on the state of diversity among educators in New York, and devise strategies to promote better diversity going forward.
- **The Underrepresented Teachers of Tomorrow Program:** This legislation, Senate Bill [S1192](#), sponsored by Senator Roxanne Persaud, establishes the underrepresented teachers of tomorrow teacher recruitment and retention program, which would provide awards designed to attract and retain educators from underrepresented demographics.
- **The Bilingual Teachers of Tomorrow Program:** This legislation, Senate Bill [S3408](#), sponsored by Senator Kevin Parker, establishes the bilingual teachers of tomorrow teacher recruitment and retention program to attract and retain bilingual, certified teachers in areas of greatest need.
- **Diversity and Empowerment Convention:** This legislation, Senate Bill [S1988](#), sponsored by Senator Robert Jackson, will direct the commissioner to convene statewide

and regional conventions to bring together underrepresented educators annually to discuss experiences and best practices, as well as allow for networking, mentorship opportunities, and support.

- **Strengthening the Amistad Commission:** Senate Bill [S1032](#), sponsored by Senator Robert Jackson, authorizes the Commissioner of Education to lead the Amistad Commission, instead of the secretary of state and expands the duties of such Commission. The Amistad Commission was established by the Legislature in 2005 to review state curriculum pertaining to the slave trade.

**Bill Sponsor Senator Jabari Brisport** said, “As a Black boy, I had a total of just one Black male teacher my entire time from kindergarten through high school. When I became a teacher myself, I learned that just 2% of teachers nationwide are Black men. We know that when BIPOC students have teachers who look like them it improves educational outcomes, and we also know that time alone is not resolving the lack of diversity in our education workforce. We must proactively develop strategies to open the door for more people of color to become teachers and to be supported once they do.”

**Bill Sponsor Senator Robert Jackson** said, “We have a responsibility to ensure that our teachers reflect the diversity of the students they serve. This is why I remain dedicated to addressing New York's teacher diversity issue. Teachers of color often bear the burden of supporting students of color who look up to them as leaders and role models. This disparity can leave them feeling isolated among their peers. Passing legislation such as my bills S1988 and S1032 is a significant step in the right direction, as it will allocate resources to ensure that all children in New York State receive a quality education. I take great pride in being a part of a Senate majority that is deeply committed to addressing this critical issue.”

**Bill Sponsor Kevin Parker** said, “I am elated to share the momentous news of the Senate's approval of The Bilingual Teachers of Tomorrow Program. This legislation, a vital part of our broader School and Education Diversity Package, signifies a giant leap towards addressing disparities in our education system. By creating a specialized program to attract and retain bilingual teachers, we are taking a significant step towards ensuring that our schools reflect the diversity of our communities. This is a monumental achievement for education equity and a testament to our commitment to providing all students with a well-rounded, culturally responsive learning experience.”

###