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# Bill passed to restore 2-year term of East Ramapo trustee

Kimberly Redmond, The Journal News Published 6:44 p.m. ET Jan. 18, 2017 | Updated 1:11 p.m. ET Jan. 19, 2017

*The bill will still need the sign-off of Gov. Andrew Cuomo.*



(Photo: Steve Lieberman/The Journal News)

she was elected to last May. The state Senate signed off on the measure last week, and it is now needs the signature of Gov. Andrew Cuomo to take effect.

A spokesman for Cuomo's press office said the bill had not yet reached the governor's desk and could not comment on when the governor would consider it.

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Charles-Pierre could not be reached for comment Wednesday afternoon.

Although Charles-Pierre ran unopposed for a two-year seat that expires in June 2018, the school board voted in late July 2016 to [invalidate the term](#) because she had not been sworn in within 30 days of the election results being certified. She was then appointed to a seat that expires this May.

Over the summer, [supporters of Charles-Pierre rallied at school board meetings](#), demanding trustees restore the term she was elected to, or, for Board President Yehuda Weissmandl to take [responsibility for the mistake and step down](#).

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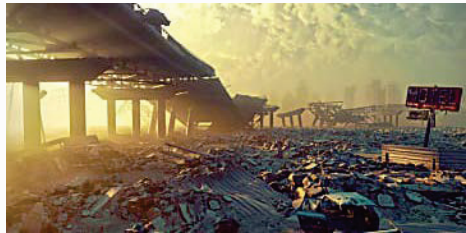
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Signs at an East Ramapo school board meeting following the halving of Sabrina Charles-Pierre's seat. (Photo: Kim Redmond)

Local education advocates, along with the [Spring Valley NAACP](#) and the [New York Civil Liberties Union](#), accused trustees of shortchanging Charles-Pierre, a woman representing the interests of public school parents on a board dominated by men who send their children to yeshivas.

Weissmandl has said what happened was "a simple error in complying with an arcane law," was not "intentional or improper" and that the situation "has been blown out of proportion."

Because Charles-Pierre was filling an unexpired seat, she needed to take the oath of office by July 11 to continue serving. However, she was sworn in three days later, at the July 14 reorganization meeting, a mistake flagged after the fact by District Clerk Cathy Russell, Weissmandl has said.

Following the Assembly's vote, Senator David Carlucci, who sponsored the bill, called Charles-Pierre "a tireless advocate for all children of East Ramapo."

"The East Ramapo school district will benefit greatly from her effort now that this problem has been solved," he added.

Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee, also a sponsor of the bill, called it "a significant step in ensuring that Sabrina Charles-Pierre, a strong advocate for the public school students of East Ramapo, would serve her full term." The assemblywoman said she has urged Cuomo to sign the bill in order to correct a mistake "that disenfranchised the voters of East Ramapo."

On Wednesday afternoon, Weissmandl issued a statement thanking the sponsors of the measure and urging Cuomo to sign it "post haste."

"When all East Ramapo stakeholders work together, we see the outcomes we need in an expedited fashion that better serves the students of this community," he said.

If the governor signs the bill, it would likely negate the need of state Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia to consider two appeals filed regarding Charles-Pierre's

seat. The NYCLU had challenged the board's actions on the grounds the district was discriminating against Charles-Pierre, while the East Ramapo school board appealed to the state for a reversal, claiming trustees were only following the law.

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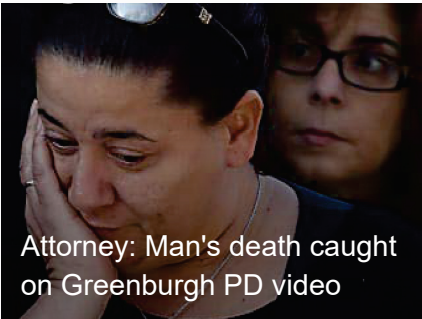


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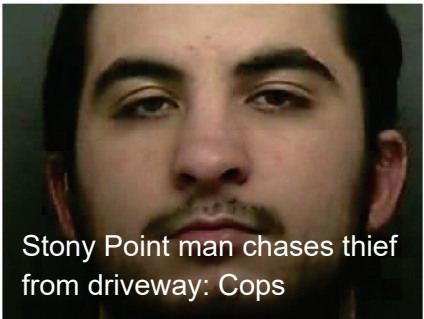


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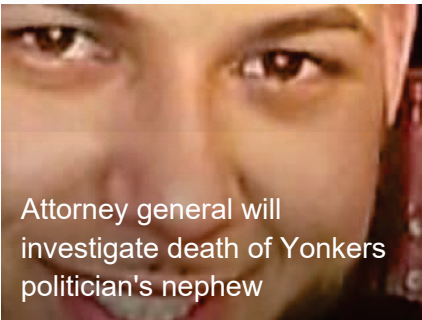
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