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Cuomo restores term of E. Ramapo school board member

Kimberly Redmond, The Journal News Published 5:32 p.m. ET Feb. 1, 2017 | Updated 8:54 p.m. ET Feb. 1, 2017



(Photo: Steve Lieberman/The Journal News)

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Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed a bill on Wednesday that restores the full term of an East Ramapo school trustee after it was halved last summer due to a technical error.

The bill, which passed unanimously in the Senate and Assembly earlier this month, allows Sabrina Charles-Pierre to serve the two-year term she was elected to last May. It was sponsored by state Sen. David Carlucci and Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee.

On Wednesday evening Charles-Pierre thanked the Senate, Assembly and Governor for passing the bill, as well as the community, school board and Superintendent Deborah Wortham for their support.

"I think that East Ramapo has so much potential to achieve so much and as long as we work together, a lot can and will be accomplished. Our children deserve the best and will get the best. There is so much work to be done. It's not going to happen overnight, but we will get there. Let us continue to work together and move forward. Remember that you can't spell 'CommUNITY' without 'Unity.' We're going all the way up!," Charles-Pierre said.

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Although Charles-Pierre ran unopposed for a two-year seat that expires in June 2018, her term was invalidated because she wasn't 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.

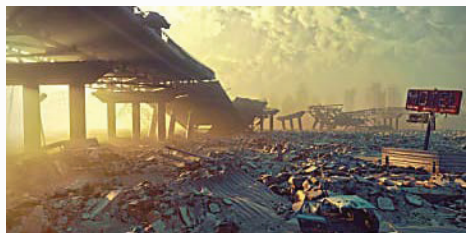
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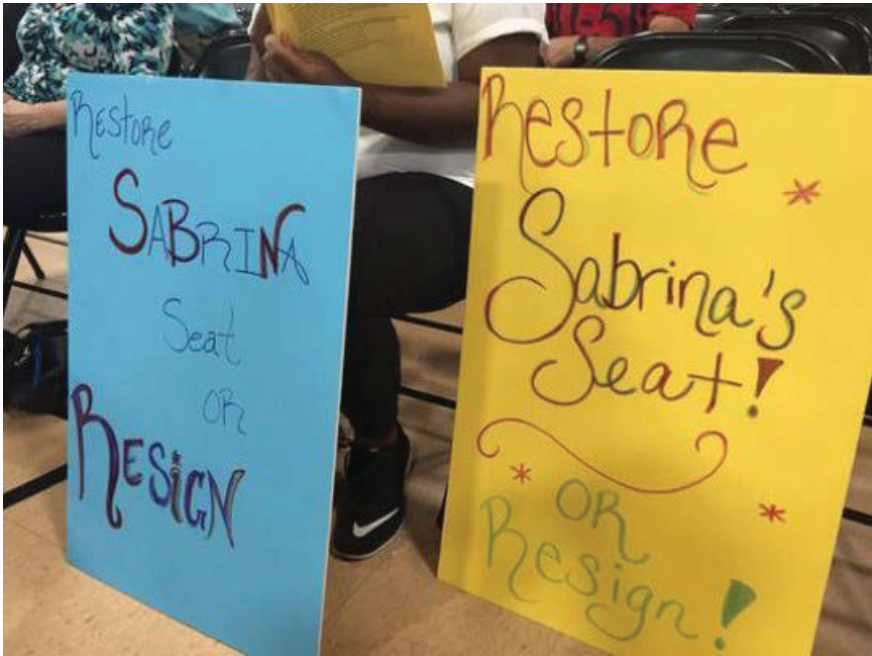


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Signs at an East Ramapo school board meeting following the halving of Sabrina Charles-Pierre's seat. (Photo: Kim Redmond)

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."

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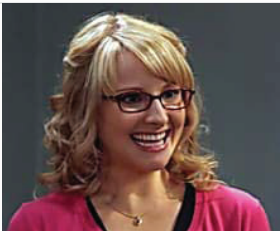
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