



RUSA Bill F20 - 02

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Sponsor: Legislative Affairs Committee

Bill to Approve the Referendum to Put Forth Three Student Voting Positions on the Board of Governors

Whereas, the Rutgers University Board of Governors is the ultimate governing body for the university and has 15 voting members, with 8 appointed by the NJ Governor and 7 from the Rutgers Board of Trustees, as well as the University President as an ex-officio member, as well as three non-voting members from the University Senate, one of which is a student senator¹,

Whereas, the aforementioned student senator does not have any voting privileges,

Whereas, any changes to the structure of the Board of Governors require a change to state law,

Whereas, State Senator Patrick Diegnan (D-18) has introduced S. 2408 to the 219th New Jersey Legislature, which “[a]dds two student representatives to board of governors of Rutgers University” should it pass², and an identical version of the bill was also introduced in the State Assembly, A. 1970, by State Representatives Andrew Zwicker and Nancy Pinkin on January 14th, 2020

Whereas, the Assembly has formally endorsed S. 2408, as introduced by Senator Diegnan, through the Solidarity and Call to Action Act (Legislative Affairs Provision)³,

¹ [Rutgers Governance Structure](#): Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. “Governance and Leadership.” rutgers.edu. The State University of New Jersey. Accessed September 12, 2020.; [Membership of the Board of Governors](#): Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. “Governing Boards of the University.” rutgers.edu. The State University of New Jersey. Accessed 12 September 12, 2020.

² [219th Legislature](#): S. 2408 - Adds two student representatives to the board of governors of Rutgers University. By Senator Patrick J. Diegnan, Jr. (D-18, Middlesex). Introduced May 2020 in the Senate Higher Education Committee.

³ [RUSA Bill S20-13](#): Solidarity and Call to Action Act (Legislative Affairs Provision). By Miguel Ribau et al. Passed by the Rutgers University Student Assembly Spring 2020, summer session.

Whereas, students have engaged in this initiative numerous times dating back decades⁴,

Whereas, the 10th RUSA Assembly had previously worked with Senator Diegnan in pushing this effort,⁵

Whereas, RUSA successfully coordinated and testified at a hearing at the Assembly Higher Education Committee in the 117th New Jersey Legislative Session⁶,

Whereas, this bill shall act as a petition for student referendum in accordance with what is prescribed in the Standing Rules and the Constitution of the Assembly⁷,

Be it hereby resolved, the Legislative Affairs committee is tasked with working with Senator Diegnan, among other legislators, to advocate for voting student representation on the Board of Governors,

Further, be it resolved by two-thirds of the Assembly that a student referendum shall be held during the Fall 2020 elections in accordance with all applicable procedures under the Constitution and the Standing Rules, where —

1. The Assembly hereby approves of the following shall be posed to the undergraduate student body during the Fall 2020 elections, to consist of two parts:
 - a. “Should the Rutgers University Board of Governors have voting student representation from the New Brunswick, Newark and Camden campuses?” -- and, should a student answer “YES”, the following shall be asked:
 - b. “Should this representative be the undergraduate student body President of each of the respective campuses?”
2. Each eligible voter shall be able to answer “YES” or “NO” to the above stated questions, or they may not vote for the question.
3. The following explanatory text will be included as part of the referendum question in order to provide relevant information and context to voting students: *“The Rutgers University Board of Governors is the body vested with “the government, control, conduct, management, and administration” of the university. It is currently composed of 15 voting members, with the President of the University holding an ex-officio non-voting seat. The Rutgers University student body currently has no voting representative(s) on*

⁴ [University Structure and Governance Committee](#): Report on Faculty and Student Board of Governors Membership. By the Rutgers University Senate. Passed by University Senate Structure and Governance Committee March 30, 2005.

⁵ Galperin, Simon. "[Push By Rutgers Student Government Builds Bipartisan Momentum For A Bill in Trenton.](#)" muckgers.com. MUCKGERS by The Medium, September 1, 2016.

⁶ New Jersey General Assembly Higher Education Committee Hearing on AR 256 - Monday, June 12, 2017 - 10:00:00 AM; [Relevant Portion: 00:00 min - 35:00 min](#)

⁷ The Constitution, in Article IX Section 1, requires that this bill pass by a two-thirds majority. This requirement shall be met by the passage of this bill. The Standing Rules, in Article VIII Section 3, requires that this bill be “processed” by the Internal Affairs Committee. This requirement was met on 12 September 2020 through the transmission of this bill to the Internal Affairs Committee and its subsequent debate.

the Board of Governors. Currently, legislation within the New Jersey State Legislature — in particular, S. 2408 — would change this to allow two students to have voting power on the Board of Governors. While the State legislation currently suggests two voting students, RUSA is looking to propose one voting seat from each campus for a total of three seats. As such, two questions are posed to the Rutgers student body on this ballot. The first is whether or not the student body believes that the New Brunswick, Newark, and Camden campuses of Rutgers should have voting representation on the Board of Governors. The second is whether or not this student representative should be the undergraduate student body President of each of these campuses.”

4. The ballot shall contain a link to the proposed legislation S. 2408 as authored by Senator Diegnan.
5. If a majority of students voting cast their ballots in the affirmative and at least one tenth of the undergraduate students vote on the referendum question, the official position of the Assembly will be to advocate:
 - a. In favor of legislation establishing three voting student representatives to the Board of Governors, each representing one of the three main campuses of Rutgers University — New Brunswick, Camden, and Newark;
 - b. For uniting the New Brunswick, Camden, and Newark campuses of Rutgers University to work in favor of getting voting student representation on the Board of Governors and working with state legislators, along with individuals, groups, and organizations throughout New Jersey, towards that end.
6. The Elections Committee shall be charged with furnishing a copy of the referendum question on the ballot to the Internal Affairs Committee for approval. The Internal Affairs Committee shall certify the results of the referendum, as required by Article IX of the RUSA Constitution.