



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

New York State Senate Westchester Delegation Hosts Virtual Forum for Local Input on the Executive Budget Proposal

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS February 7, 2025

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(Westchester, NY) – The New York State Senate’s Westchester Delegation held a virtual forum on the Governor’s proposed 2025-26 New York State Budget to get feedback from the community on Thursday, February 6, 2025.

More than 50 people from across Westchester County signed up for the forum, providing input on matters on topics funded through the state budget, including mental health,

education, women's health, youth and family services, law enforcement and criminal justice, and a host of other issues.

Thursday's virtual forum is the first of two public feedback sessions planned by the Westchester Delegation, with a second forum in the works. This second forum will be announced and publicized once all details are finalized.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said: "Open communication and public involvement are essential to good governance. As your elected representatives, we need to hear directly from you about your priorities and concerns regarding the state budget. Local budget forums create an opportunity for meaningful discussions and help us advocate more effectively for our community's needs in Albany. Your input plays a vital role in shaping policies that affect our daily lives. I encourage all constituents to take part—whether in-person or virtually—to ensure your voices help guide our decision-making.

Senator Shelley B. Mayer said: "I am grateful to all those who participated in this year's Westchester Delegation Budget forum and who have voiced their priorities for the 2025-2026 State Budget. My colleagues and I have an obligation to ensure the budget includes the necessary investments and services that support our community, and it is so important that we hear directly from those we represent. As always, I strongly encourage all Westchester residents to voice their concerns, needs, and priorities. My colleagues and I are committed to fighting for all those we represent, and I thank those who took the time to testify via Zoom or submitted written testimony."

Senator Pete Harckham said: "It is incredibly important for our residents to be able to express their priorities and concerns directly to their state legislators during the budget process. Because it's not our budget—it's the people's budget. As we work together to solve the many problems we face and make critical investments in our communities, our decision-

making is strengthened with open and honest communication in gatherings like the recent Virtual Budget Forum.”

Senator Jamaal T. Bailey said: "Engaging directly with constituents is the cornerstone of effective representation. Being able to joint the Westchester Delegation's virtual forum today was a public and vital platform for community voices to shape the state budget. As the 36th district's senator, which includes Westchester's city of Mount Vernon - ensuring policies reflect the real needs of the people and local organizations that live and work in the county contributes to building a better future for all."

Senator Nathalia Fernandez said: "This budget forum was an important reminder of the power of public input in shaping our state's future. Westchester residents brought forward thoughtful insights on issues like education, mental health, and youth services—issues that directly impact families and communities. These discussions fuel our decision-making in the Senate and ensure that Albany remains connected to the needs of our constituents. We are committed to continuing this dialogue and working together to create a stronger, more responsive state government."

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