



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Senate Moves to Protect Schools From Cyber-thieves

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS June 21, 2010

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The Senate Democratic Majority has passed legislation (S7323/Foley) establishing the “School District Financial Security Task Force” charged with helping school districts fortify protections for funds in bank and other financial accounts.

Recently, school districts have been targeted by crooks carrying out cyber-theft. For instance, in December of 2009 cyber criminals transferred more than three million dollars out of the bank accounts of the Duanesburg Central School District over the course of three days. The majority of the funds were recovered, mostly as a result of the amateur-level experience of the criminals. However, these incidences reflect a growing vulnerability districts have when it comes to their funds, particularly as cyber-thieves access more sophisticated technology.

The task force will develop guidelines for schools about money management security. The state education, banking, and homeland security agencies are directed to investigate security issues that affect school districts and their financial management, develop guidelines for best practices to secure school district finances, and make recommendations for legislation.

“Criminal activities that threaten the financial security of our school districts simply cannot be tolerated. I am pleased to join my colleagues in support of legislation implementing the

measures necessary to safeguard taxpayer dollars,” said Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (35th District – D/WF).

The legislation passed overwhelmingly, 43-13, with half of the Republican Conference voting no.

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