



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins Advocates Redistricting Bill With Mayor Koch

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS March 1, 2011

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(Albany)- Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins stood with Mayor Ed Koch and several of her legislative colleagues at the Capital today, urging passage of Governor Andrew Cuomo's redistricting bill. The legislation would create an independent commission to draw legislative districts, which was a major aspect of Mayor Koch's reform pledge last fall. Senator Stewart-Cousins is designated as a Hero of Reform by Mayor Koch, and promises to fight for passage of the legislation.

"This bill fulfills the promise that 53 of my Senate colleagues and I made to the people of New York. I would hope that all Senators who signed Mayor Koch's pledge would join us in passing this legislation and finally establishing an independent redistricting commission in this State," said Senator Stewart-Cousins.

The power to draw State Senate districts currently lies in the hands of the majority conference leadership of the New York State Senate. In years past, districts have been drawn to ensure the reelection of legislators who represent the political party of those drawing the lines, and Senator Stewart-Cousins says this makes it difficult to remove entrenched incumbents from office.

“Gerrymandering only serves the interests of political parties and legislators in power, not the people whom government officials are elected to serve. One of the reasons I signed Mayor Koch’s pledge last year was to end this practice and give the ability to choose elected leaders back to the people of New York, which is where it belongs in the first place,” the Senator added.

District lines are due to be drawn this year, and will not be redrawn for another ten years. Senator Stewart-Cousins urged the bill to be passed before the upcoming redistricting process.

“This is a matter of transparency and accountability, and we owe it to our constituents to get this done before the district lines are drawn this year.”

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