



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Republican Senate Budget Proposal Slashes Yonkers Education Funding

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS March 16, 2011

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*Senator Stewart-Cousins Sends Letter to Majority Leader Urging Restoration of Funds*

(Albany) - Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins spoke on the floor of the Senate yesterday, urging full restoration of Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) Aid to the City of Yonkers. The Republican Senate Budget Resolution, approved yesterday, cut VLT Aid to Yonkers by \$15 million, which would have a devastating impact on the Yonkers School District.

In the impassioned speech, Senator Stewart-Cousins explained that the Senate Majority's Budget Resolution would disproportionately impact the Yonkers City Schools adding that the city was already facing an 8% cut in education funding in Governor Cuomo's budget. Since the VLT Aid, by law, is disbursed directly to the city's schools, the result would be a massive \$32.5 million shortfall for the historically underfunded district. Yonkers is one of the five largest school districts in the State, serving 26,000 students, and the Republican Senate Majority's Budget Resolution, if enacted into law, would have a much greater impact on Yonkers than it would on the other four.

Following yesterday's Senate Session, Senator Stewart-Cousins sent a letter to Majority Leader Dean Skelos underscoring the devastating effects of the Republican Senate Budget

Resolution on Yonkers.

“While Yonkers is a “Big Five” school district, the original proposed cut was second only to New York City and higher in percentage than every other district. This added cut makes it the largest percentage and only double digit cut of the “Big Five”—a distinction that will undermine its success for decades.” Senator Stewart-Cousins wrote in her letter to Majority Leader Skelos.

The Senator also called upon Majority Leader Skelos to consider two pieces of legislation which passed the Senate last year, but did not become law. The first, S. 1011, would provide the Yonkers City Schools with \$4.8 million for the district’s Pre-Kindergarten program, and the second, S. 1012 would provide \$3.98 million to address the district’s growth of approximately 1500 students.

“Although this legislation would only address a small portion of this year’s proposed cut to Yonkers’ schools, it recognizes the student increase and more appropriately meets the District’s growing needs going forward,” wrote the Senator.

She continued: “Therefore, I am requesting the restoration of the cuts to Yonkers, including the VLT money, and the consideration of these bills, designed to create more equity in Yonkers schools funding going forward.”

Currently, the Senate and Assembly have passed their respective one-house budget resolutions. Conference Committees will meet today to work out differences.

Senator Stewart-Cousins’ letter to Majority Leader Skelos is attached.

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