



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Press Release: Senate Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins Urges Immediate Action on Tough Ethics Package

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS May 7, 2014

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*Common Sense Reform Legislation Would Limit Use of Campaign Money; Strip Pensions of Any Official Who Violates Public Trust; And Provide Genuine Campaign Finance Reform*

Albany, NY – Senate Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, along with her Democratic Conference colleagues, today called on the Senate Majority Coalition to immediately bring legislation to reform state government and combat the ongoing corruption issues facing New York State to the Senate floor. The Senate Democratic legislative package builds on bills introduced during the 2013 session, but were left unaccomplished as Republican/IDC Senators refused to advance them out of committee.

“New Yorkers deserve a state government they can be proud of, and that requires decisive leadership to enact ethics reforms and clean up Albany,” Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said. “Public corruption and the abuse of power is a problem that must be confronted and eliminated. I urge my colleagues in the Senate Republican Coalition to join with the Senate Democratic Conference to clean up Albany.”

Leader Stewart-Cousins’ bill, S.4705-B, would establish a public financing system for state campaigns and require greater disclosure of campaign donations. Campaigns in New York State are among the most expensive in the nation, with contributions totaling

approximately \$105 million during the 2012 election cycle. Under S.4705-B, eligible contributions to candidates for statewide office up to \$250 would be matched at the rate of \$6 for every \$1, with the exception of unopposed candidates who would not receive any public funds.

The other eight pieces of legislation introduced by members of the Senate Democratic Conference will:

- Lower contribution limits (S.7181/Gianaris);
- Retroactively strip pension benefits from any state or local official convicted of a felony involving breach of public trust (S.1133/Breslin);
- Strengthen the regulations regarding the use of campaign money (S.7184/Gipson);
- Cap contributions to 'soft money' accounts (S.7203/Krueger);
- Outlaw the use of campaign money for criminal defense (S.5094/O'Brien);
- Require the disclosure of bundles (S.7186/Rivera);
- Close the LLC loophole (S.166-A/Squadron); and
- Close a loophole in disclosure requirements (S.7135/Tkaczyk).

"The bills introduced today will clean up Albany and help New Yorkers regain their trust in our state government. These nine pieces of legislation should be immediately brought to the Senate floor so that all New York voters will be able to see where their elected officials stand on the issue of good government and ethics reforms," Leader Stewart-Cousins concluded.

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