



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Democratic Conference Leader, Announces Senate Approval for New York State Medical Marijuana Program

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS June 20, 2014

| ISSUE: **HEALTH, CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**

Yonkers, NY - Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the Democratic Conference Leader, today announced passage of legislation to establish a medical marijuana program in New York State.

Prior to voting for the bill, Senator Stewart-Cousins said, "I hope that everyone who has taken the time, pushed this rock up the hill, understands that we could never have done it without you. Our hats off, much gratitude. Let's get this done."

The legislation includes provisions to ensure medical marijuana is reserved only for patients with serious conditions and is dispensed and administered by the appropriate state agencies to ensure that the program cannot be abused.

Stewart-Cousins mentioned a Yonkers neighbor whose husband with cancer traveled to California for relief before he died.

"People suffering from serious diseases and illnesses should have access to the medically necessary treatments they need here in New York," she added. "This legislation will help New

Yorkers who currently experience debilitating illnesses and endure great pain and suffering by providing them with the ability to utilize medical marijuana as prescribed by authorized medical professionals. This bill also contains safeguards that will ensure that medical marijuana cannot be abused.”

The bill passed by the State Legislature and supported by Governor Cuomo will:

- Establish a certification and registry process for physicians to administer medical marijuana;
- Put in place a process for patients to obtain, and manufacturers to dispense, medical marijuana;
- Specify that the serious conditions for which medical marijuana can be prescribed are: cancer, HIV/AIDS, ALS (Lou Gehrig’s Disease), Parkinson’s Disease, multiple sclerosis, damage to the nervous tissue of the spinal cord with objective neurological indication on intractable spasticity, epilepsy, inflammatory bowel disease, neuropathies and Huntington’s Disease;
- Establish a Class-E felony for a practitioner that certifies an individual as eligible
- if he or she knows or reasonably should know the person who is asking for it has no need for the medication;
- Establish a misdemeanor offense for recipients of medical marijuana that sell or trade the medication; and
- Create a 7% excise tax on every sale of medical marijuana by a registered organization to a certified patient or designated caregiver.

“I am proud to join my colleagues in the State Senate, as well as the State Assembly and Governor Cuomo, in taking steps to ensure that New Yorkers who require medical marijuana have access to the medication they need to address their conditions. This initiative will help New Yorkers in need and protect against abuse or unauthorized use of medical marijuana,” Senator Stewart-Cousins concluded.