



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Senate Democratic Leader Stewart-Cousins Calls for Senate Action on Primary Elections Consolidation Bill

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS February 3, 2016

**(Albany - February 3rd)** Following Assembly passage of legislation that would consolidate New York's primary elections, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the Senate Democratic Leader, has called for the Senate Republican Majority to bring this bill to the floor for a vote. Currently, New York holds multiple primary elections for federal, state and local candidates and this unfunded mandate costs county governments millions of dollars as a result. Under Senator Stewart-Cousins' legislation, which is co-sponsored by Senator George Latimer, all non-Presidential primary elections would be held in June and the resulting savings to county governments and property taxpayers would be \$50 million over a two-year campaign cycle.

"Merging primary dates is a common sense way to increase participation in the electoral process and save New York taxpayers millions of dollars," Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins said. "I applaud my colleagues in the State Assembly, especially bill sponsor Michael Cusick, for passing this common sense legislation. Now is the time for the Senate Republican Majority to follow the Assembly's lead and finally end this unfunded mandate."

The legislation advanced by Senator Stewart-Cousins and Assemblyman Cusick would bring New York into compliance with the federal MOVE Act, which requires states to provide

absentee ballots to military and non-military citizens living overseas no later than 45 days before a federal election. The current September primary date is too close to the November Election Day to meet that mandate, which means New York State must act to ensure these citizens are able to exercise their right to vote.

Bill Co-Sponsor, Senator George Latimer said, "It is wrong for Albany to maintain an unfunded mandate on local governments by requiring multiple primary elections due to legislative inaction. I applaud Senate Democratic Leader Stewart-Cousins for sponsoring this bill and prodding the Senate Republican Majority to take action. It's now time for the Senate Republicans to join us in making this simple but important change for the sake of democracy and fiscal responsibility."