



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Senate Democrats Form MWBE Task Force

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS March 2, 2017

| ISSUE: **MWBE (DIVISION OF MINORITY AND WOMEN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT)**

Albany, NY - On Thursday, March 2nd, Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins announced that Senator James Sanders will lead the Senate Democratic Conference's newly formed Task Force on Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE). Serving on the Task Force are Senator Jamaal Bailey, Senator Leroy Comrie, Senator Martin Malave Dilan, Senator Todd Kaminsky, Senator Kevin Parker, Senator Gustavo Rivera, and Senator Toby Stavisky. The MWBE Task Force will work to find innovated ways to better encourage and support MWBEs as a valuable part of growing our economy.

"As we work to find creative ideas to grow our economy in New York State, empowering MWBEs is an important part of this effort," Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said. "I look forward to the impactful work that will come out of this task force, especially under the leadership of Senator Sanders who has been a pioneering legislator and advocate on this issue. We must harness the potential of MWBEs in our communities to spur economic activity throughout New York State."

Senate Democratic MWBE Task Force Chair Senator James Sanders said, "I am enormously proud to have been selected to lead the Senate Democratic Conference's MWBE Task Force, which will work to find innovative ways, both legislatively and otherwise, to help empower these businesses and grow New York's economy. As the father of MWBEs, having authored

Local Law 1 and Local 129, during my time in the City Council. I have made it my mission to work with business leaders and advocates to redesign and level the playing field in a way that helps MWBEs realize their full potential.”

Senator Sanders is the original author of New York City’s MWBE laws. During his time in the City Council, Sanders authored Local Law 129 (2005), and Local Law 1 (2013), a type of affirmative action, designed to enhance the ability of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises to compete for city contracts, with the goal of essentially leveling the playing field. Senator Sanders was assigned to Mayor de Blasio’s newly formed, 17-member, advisory council, which has been tasked with increasing MWBE participation in city contracting and helping the city achieve its goal of awarding more than \$16 billion in city contracts to MWBEs over the next 10 years.

The Senate Democratic Conference MWBE Task Force’s goals are to develop legislative solutions to improve New York State’s MWBE policies, provide oversight and analysis of the State’s current MWBE policies and provide public reports outlining different issues regarding MWBEs.

Senator Jamaal Bailey said, “I am honored to have been chosen to serve on the Senate Democratic Conference’s MWBE Task Force. As Democrats, we share a deeply held commitment to ensuring that minority and/or women owned businesses have the tools to grow and succeed. The success of MWBEs is not only vital to the revitalization of our local and statewide economy, but to help narrow the bitter inequalities that too often plague our communities.”

Senator Leroy Comrie said, “The issue of empowering MWBEs is overdue for resolution. We should not have to continue to be in an environment where their businesses cannot thrive. I look forward to working with Senator Sanders to create a set of regulations and policies to

increase the ability of MWBEs to prosper.”

Senator Martin Malavé Dilan said, “I’ll always welcome the opportunity to explore, create and advocate for more and greater opportunities for our minority and women owned enterprises. It’s an honor to be named to the Senate Democratic Conference’s MWBE Task Force and I thank Leader Stewart-Cousins for the chance.”

Senator Todd Kaminsky said, “I’m proud to be selected to serve on the Senate Democrat MWBE Task Force and help ensure that women and minority-owned businesses can thrive in New York's economy. I look forward to helping these businesses prosper during such challenging times.”

Senator Kevin Parker said, “Minority-and -Women-Owned Businesses (MWBE's) are increasingly developing throughout New York State and our Task Force is working to ensure that we are continuously developing legislation that works to provide resources, funding and support for Minority and Women owned businesses. Our goal is to not only maintain and expand the various Minority Women Owned Businesses throughout New York State but to ensure that they are receiving proper certifications to take on government based agency contracts. Through supporting more MWBE's we are increasing job opportunities and availability for all New Yorkers.”

Senator Gustavo Rivera said, “I look forward to serving on the Senate Democratic Conference's MWBE Task Force and to continue our fight to invest in this common sense economic development initiative. Small businesses are the backbone of our State’s economy and empowering minority and women-owned businesses to unleash their full potential will help New York prosper. The Senate Democrats have led the fight to invest in MWBEs and this task force will help us continue to ensure New York encourages MWBEs to grow and thrive.”

Senator Toby Stavisky said, “The MWBE program ensures that minority- and women-owned businesses able to participate in bids for government contracts. We need to ensure the New York State Minority- and Women-Owned Enterprise is more inclusive to local business owners to guarantee fairness for all. As someone who represents a majority Asian American district, I am happy to join my colleagues in the senate for this task force so that we can take the time to look at NYS MWBE and uncover ways to improve it.”