



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Senate Democratic Leader Stewart-Cousins' Remarks On Senate Republican Budget Resolution

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS March 14, 2018

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Leader Uses Remarks to Blast Lack of Action on Gun Safety and No Ethics Reforms

“Thank you, Mr. President. So we sit here just about two weeks before our budget is due. And I think we all know that this will be a long two weeks.

The reality is the State Budget has become more than a fiscal document; it has also become a policy document. It is the main tool our state government uses to advance policies. And this document offers a stark contrast between the Democrats and the Republicans. The

alternative offered by the Senate Republicans simply does not tackle the issues facing our state. And really shows how out of step with the rest of the state they have become.

Mr. President, we sit here today, just hours after students here in this state and across our nation stood together and said enough is enough. Enough with the mass shootings, enough of the gun violence. They are demanding real solutions. And yet this document does nothing to address the proliferation of guns and growing number of mass shootings. I have to say that is mind-boggling and sends the absolute wrong message.

And yet again Albany is rocked by another scandal and this document does nothing to address ethics. Yes, the majority of people in government work hard and do the right thing but that doesn't mean we can sit back and do nothing. This budget plan also does nothing about our abysmal voting participation rates. This resolution fails to properly address the tax crisis that the Trump Administration has created with their crazy tax scheme.

This resolution fails to adequately fund our schools and once again favors charter schools over public schools.

This plan once again doesn't include the Child Victims Act and justice for so many survivors. Mr. President, let's be clear a passing mention is not good enough. We need real action and a real plan. This plan once again leaves our Dreamers behind and doesn't include the Dream Act.

This plan doesn't adequately deal with the growing infrastructure crisis, especially our crumbling MTA. This plan doesn't deal with the crisis that is facing NYCHA and doesn't deal with our shrinking affordable housing market across the state. This plan doesn't deal with so many important issues involving women's health including finally codifying choice in our state constitution.

This plan once again continues ignoring the LGBTQ community and even rejects the proposal to outlaw the use of Gay or Trans panic as a defense for murder

This plan does nothing to fix our criminal justice system. We need to end cash bail and we need to ensure New Yorkers' rights to a speedy trial, to help end the unconstitutional and lengthy incarceration of our citizens while they wait for justice.

This plan doesn't recognize that New York needs to do more to protect our environment and water supply in the face of Donald Trump and his allies' deregulations and climate change denial. The stakes for New Yorkers have never been higher, and the Republican's budget plan simply does not address the many needs of our constituents.

We have the ability to pass a sound fiscal document AND stand up for our constituents' rights, and I urge all of my colleagues to appreciate that fact.

Over the coming weeks, the Senate Democrats will continue to advocate for our plans to be included in the final State Budget, because New Yorkers deserve better than what is being presented today.”