



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Passover Greetings and District News

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS March 27, 2021

| ISSUE: **PASSOVER; COVID-19 UPDATES; NURSING HOME REFORMS**

Dear Friends,

Passover begins tonight and once again families and friends would be gathering together to retell the story of how the Jewish people escaped from slavery in Egypt. Some will be lucky this year to have the Seder with family they couldn't have last year. Some will still have to see their loved ones on Zoom. We all pray that next year will be better. I wish you peace and joy as you celebrate this age old tradition.

After the sadness and tragedy of this past week, there is no better time to stand by each other and for each other in solidarity.

LATEST NEWS

COVID vaccinations continue to be available, but our supply is still not where we would like it to be. For the latest list of pharmacies, state sites, and health clinics, please click [here](#). As you may know all adults 50 and over are now eligible to get the vaccine at all sites.

Please do not hesitate to email (scousins@nysenate.gov) or call (914-423-4031) my office if you are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine and cannot book an appointment.

My office continues to have a large supply of PPE. If your school, religious institution, library, non-profit, office or residential building would like a supply of masks and/or sanitizers, please fill out this [form](#), and a member of my staff will be in touch.

We have received several calls recently about fraudulent unemployment complaints. If you receive a letter from NYS Department of Labor about unemployment benefits that you have not filed for, report it immediately to NYS DOL at dol.ny.gov/report-fraud and to the FTC at identitytheft.gov. Watch out for fraudsters posing as DOL employees through fake emails, text messages, and social media accounts. DOL representatives do not reach out through text messages, and will never ask you for your driver's license information.

NYS BUDGET

These last weeks have been very busy in Albany. Not only has the Senate Majority passed our one-house budget bill, we also passed much needed legislation to protect nursing home residents and a bill to prevent needless, prolonged solitary confinement.

We are working through the budget process, and our one-house senate budget bill restores much needed funds to schools, provides commercial and residential rental assistance as well as relief for working and middle-class taxpayers. Now we are in negotiation with the Governor and Assembly. For details, please click [here](#).

LEGISLATION TO PROTECT NURSING HOME RESIDENTS

I am proud that the Senate Majority passed legislation to better support and protect our nursing home residents. The tragic situation in nursing homes during the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed a dire need to guarantee greater transparency and accountability. Our strong commitment continues to prioritize the wellbeing, rights, and needs of residents and their families.

- **Emergency or Disaster Treatment Protection Act:** This bill, [S.5177](#), repeals the extra protections from liability granted to nursing homes, hospitals, and other healthcare facilities for treating patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Mandatory Translation of Rights and Information on Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program:** This bill, [S.4377](#), mandates a prominent display to inform residents of the Long-term Care Ombudsman Program and requires the Department of Health to translate the nursing home residents' bill of rights into the six most common non-English languages spoken in New York State.
- **Improved Certificate of Need Process:** This bill [S.4893A](#), adds transparency to the review process for change of nursing home ownership or operations proposals brought before the Public Health and Health planning Council.

LEGISLATION TO REFORM SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

After many years of trying, the Senate Democratic Majority passed legislation to reform our prison system to prevent prolonged, segregated confinement. Click [here](#) for the [bill](#) whose reforms are humane, morally right and fiscally responsible.

Until next time.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

New York State Senator, 35th District

President Pro Tem, Majority Leader