



A Special Message from
ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS
New York State Senator, 35th District
Senate Democratic Leader



Dear Friend:

The final days of the legislative session were real nail-biters. There was important unfinished business that took time to negotiate. Most notably, the rent control laws that expired on June 15th. Despite the Senate Democrats' best efforts to strengthen tenant protections and preserve affordable units, the Republican Majority negotiated a bill that essentially extended the current rent laws for four years. That extension was included in the final omnibus bill, referred to as 'The Big Ugly,' which also continued the tax cap and provided new property tax relief. There is also an additional \$25 million for Yonkers' cash-strapped public schools, that faced devastating layoffs and program cuts including all sports.

The Senate Democrats that I lead will continue to fight for legislation to improve the lives of

millions of New Yorkers. We STILL need to pass meaningful ethics and campaign finance reforms, especially following this year's corruption scandals. We need rent control legislation that strengthens protections for tenants and preserves affordable units so families can stay where they live. New York needs to focus on education reform that includes all stakeholders and less student testing. We should pass Paid Family Leave. We need to raise the Age of Criminal Responsibility and address inadequacies in our criminal justice system. We must raise the minimum wage to help lift thousands of hard-working New Yorkers out of poverty.

While there is still much more work to do, I was proud to join my colleagues this year in supporting and passing an education aid increase of \$1.3 billion, for a total of \$23.5 billion. Bills protecting women in the workplace, by requiring equal pay for equal work, sexual harassment protections and pregnancy accommodation were also approved. The state will also assist low-income New Yorkers with basic health coverage. There is property tax relief for middle class homeowners that includes a "circuit-breaker" rebate.

I was also able to fulfill local requests by introducing and passing bills that when signed into law by the Governor will: require that 5 year olds in Yonkers attend kindergarten; allow Dobbs Ferry to take steps to create a residential permit parking system; allow Westchester County to expeditiously issue certain bonds for water & sewer projects; allow Yonkers to raise its sales tax to produce an annual revenue stream for its public schools; allow Yonkers detention officers injured in the line of duty to be eligible for disability coverage; and enable Greenburgh and Yonkers to add several hundred thousand dollars in revenue from hotel visitors.

I hope to see you in the district soon. In the meantime, enjoy your summer !

Sincerely,

Andrea Stewart-Cousins
New York State Senator, 35th District
Senate Democratic Leader