



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

From the Senator



Dear Friend;

With the new year, a new term began for me as the proud representative of the 35th District, which includes Greenburgh and Scarsdale, and part of Yonkers, New Rochelle and White Plains. My three children joined me for my swearing in on January 7th. I continue in my leadership role, with my Democratic colleagues re-electing me as the Senate Democratic Conference Leader. This year that also means that I will serve as the first female Minority Leader in New York State. I thank you for re-electing me as your State Senator and am grateful for

my colleagues' confidence and support.

Our state is facing many challenges, and as legislators, we will be making important choices as we review the Governor's 2015 State Budget Proposal. My first priority is to continue to grow our economy and create jobs. We are seeing encouraging signs -- the statewide unemployment rate is at its lowest level since 2008, at 5.8% in December of 2014. To assist our low wage earners and to move them out of poverty, we must raise the minimum wage to narrow the growing income inequality in our state.

We also recognize that while middle class taxpayers are paying the lowest rate in 60 years, families are still struggling. I support the Governor's proposed circuit breaker, where homeowners will be eligible for an income tax credit if their property tax bill is greater than 6% of their income. This measure would help about a million homeowners and a million renters if it passes the Legislature.

As a former teacher, I understand first-hand the obstacles that many New York educators are facing and the resources they so desperately need in order to help our children. The roll-out of the Common Core was flawed. We were able to reduce testing requirements, recognizing that excessive testing is not the answer to improving students' scores and achievement. I continue to advocate for resources for our schools that are based on the district's needs, so that every child in New York regardless of the zip code in which they live, gets the same opportunities to succeed.

In my opening remarks on the Senate floor, I pledged to make Albany an example of good government. We cannot let distractions such as criminal proceedings involving legislators, nor partisan bickering, to distract us from our important work. I will continue to work hard on your behalf to give New Yorkers the responsible and productive government they deserve.

Sincerely,

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

New York State Senator, 35th District
Democratic Conference Leader

[To read the full script or see the video of the Senator's remarks, click here.](#)

Latest News

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins Speaking at the Family Planning Advocates Rally

In the Community



(White Plains - January 31st) Senator Stewart-Cousins attended the conclusion of a Yogathon which took place at the



(Albany - January 26th) Minority Leader Stewart-Cousins has dedicated her career to promote the health of women and their families including securing access to confidential, quality reproductive health care for all New Yorkers. Senator Stewart-Cousins spoke at a news conference in support of Family Planning Advocates who continue to fight to ensure that women's health, safety and equality be protected by state law.

In line with her dedication to progressive, common sense approaches to ensuring that safe reproductive health care is always available to the women of New York, the Leader eloquently described how far we have come since the 42nd anniversary of the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision. She also detailed how far we still have to go in order to provide women in New York State autonomy over their bodies, and to ensure that safe practices are being used to achieve this end. And once again requested that the Legislature pass the entire Women's Equality Act. [More..](#)

Update on Tappan Zee Bridge Tolls & Infrastructure Investment

(Yonkers - January 21st) When Governor Cuomo released his 2016 Budget, he included \$1.3 billion dollars of the housing settlement funds to invest in the State Thruway system. The intent is to keep tolls down and allow for critical repair and maintenance as well as support the construction of the new New York Bridge to replace the aging Tappan Zee in Tarrytown.

On January 21st, Senator Stewart-Cousins applauded the

YWCA Dance Studio Hall in White Plains. This special event was hosted for the community by the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh Westchester Chapter as part of the nationwide effort to create awareness about yoga and its advantages. [View..](#)



(Irvington - January 29th) The Senator posed with Muriel Fox, co-founder of the National Organization for Women, at the screening of the documentary film "She's Beautiful When She's Angry." Ms. Fox, a New York resident, is a pioneer who fought for gender equality and is featured in the film chronicling the start of the women's movement. [View..](#)



(Yonkers - January 10th) Senator Stewart-Cousins hosted an open house to celebrate the New Year and give her constituents the opportunity to learn more about what her office can do for the people in her district. It was a well-attended event with constituents, friends and colleagues in the government and community organizations from all corners of her district. [View..](#)

Governor's decision and issued this statement: "The new Tappan Zee Bridge is the most ambitious and largest infrastructure investment project in the United States, and, once completed, it will have a positive impact for our community and all of New York State. As this project has progressed, I have consistently called for steps to be taken to ensure the tolls remain as low as possible, as higher tolls would have a negative impact on our local community and the entire state economy. I commend Governor Cuomo for his commitment to invest a portion of bank settlement funds into infrastructure projects like this one, located within my district in Tarrytown, to ease the burden on taxpayers and commuters, and allow New York and its residents to continue on a path toward prosperity. [More..](#)

Senator Stewart-Cousins Urges Citizens to Be Prepared for Emergencies & Natural Disasters



(Dobbs Ferry - January 30th) Did you know that New York State, in collaboration with the National Guard, is helping train citizens to be ready when disaster strikes? At the Citizen's Preparedness session in Dobbs Ferry, Senator Stewart-Cousins encouraged her constituents to have a [preparedness kit](#) in hand at all times, a backpack which holds your most essential survival items you can quickly grab at a time of an emergency, and to sign up for [NY-Alert](#) to receive critical emergency-related information. The Senator voted for \$30 million in funding in the State Budget last year to improve New York's ability to handle emergencies



(Yonkers - January 2nd) Senator Stewart-Cousins was honored to attend the swearing in of Yonkers first Democratic African-American City Judge, the Honorable Evan Inlaw (left). Also pictured, the Hon. Bruce E. Tolbert, (right), was Yonkers first African-American City Judge, and now serves as a State Supreme Court Justice, and Yonkers first African-American City Councilwoman, Symra Brandon, who is currently the Yonkers Democratic City Chairwoman. [View..](#)



(Elmsford - December 31st) The week long celebration of African culture and traditions known as Kwanzaa ended on New Year's Day. This event was held Tuesday night in Elmsford. Happy Kwanzaa..and Happy New Year! [View..](#)



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across our state and is glad to see it all in fruition. [View..](#)

New Fraud Protection for Immigrants in New York

(Yonkers - February 2nd) Our state has a proud history of welcoming immigrants, and State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins is proud to announce that the state now has the first-ever, permanent state office of its kind, the New York State Office for New Americans (NYSONA). NYSONA provides immigration assistance at community outreach center, teaches new New Yorkers English, aids in the naturalization process and provides immigrants with free legal advice. On February 2nd, new state laws also took effect to protect immigrants from unscrupulous providers who promise services they do not deliver.

“When immigrants come to New York they need assurance that service providers are there to help them on their path to citizenship and success, not take advantage of them,” Senator Stewart-Cousins said. “I commend Governor Cuomo and the Legislature for taking action to ensure that immigrants are welcomed with respect and get the valuable services they deserve as new New Yorkers.” [To learn more, click here.](#)

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Contact Information

District Office:

28 Wells Avenue, Building #3
Yonkers, NY 10701
Phone: [\(914\) 423-4031](tel:(914)423-4031)
Fax: [\(914\) 423-0979](tel:(914)423-0979)

Albany Office:

188 State Street, 907 LOB
Albany, NY 12247
Phone: [\(518\) 455-2585](tel:(518)455-2585)
Fax: [\(518\) 426-6811](tel:(518)426-6811)

Email:

scousins@nysenate.gov

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