



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins Leads State Senate Passage of Worker Protections and Wage Theft Legislation

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS March 6, 2025

| ISSUE: **WORKER PROTECTIONS**



(Albany, NY) – This week, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins led the State Senate in passing a sweeping legislative package that strengthens workplace protections and combats wage theft, ensuring that hardworking families in Westchester County can earn fair wages in safe and just conditions.

The slate of seven bills takes significant steps to protect workers from exploitation, increase financial security for families, and hold bad employers accountable. Key provisions include increasing Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) benefits, streamlining the process for wage theft claims, clamping down on the misuse of payroll funds by employers, ensuring fair compensation for workers, and strengthening enforcement mechanisms through the Department of Labor.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said: “This legislative package cracks down on bad actors who take advantage of workers with little consequence, marking another step forward in the fight against wage theft and workplace exploitation. It’s another way we can stand up and protect the working people of Westchester County and across New York State.”

This effort is part of Sen. Stewart-Cousins’ ongoing commitment to making New York safer, fairer, more affordable, and more prosperous for all. These measures are particularly important for Westchester families who rely on their hard-earned wages to afford housing, groceries, healthcare, and other essentials. By closing loopholes that allow bad employers to exploit workers and reinforcing fair labor standards, this legislation helps create a more stable and thriving community. Bills in the package include the following:

- **Bans Forced Severance Agreements:** This law stops employers from pressuring workers into signing unfair severance agreements. It also ensures employees have enough time to review their agreements before making a decision.
- **Raises Disability Benefits and Expands Coverage:** This law increases short-term disability payments and expands protections for workers who need disability or paid family leave.
- **Helps Workers Recover Stolen Wages:** This law makes it easier for employees to take legal action against employers who steal wages. It allows workers to freeze employer assets while a case is in court and makes it easier to hold business owners personally responsible

for wage theft.

- **Gives Domestic Workers Paid Sick Leave:** This law requires employers to provide paid sick leave to domestic workers, ensuring they have time to recover from illness without losing income.
- **Protects Employee Paychecks from Theft:** This law creates a new crime for employers who misuse payroll funds, helping to safeguard workers' earnings.
- **Strengthens Wage Theft Protections:** This law ensures that bonuses and other non-discretionary payments are legally considered wages, making it harder for employers to withhold pay.

Stops Work for Employers Who Misclassify Workers: This law allows the state to shut down businesses that misclassify employees or lie about their workforce size to insurance companies.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2025-S372

- Introduced

- ○ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ○ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Establishes the "no severance ultimatums act"

December 30, 2024

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Michael Gianaris**

Do you support this bill?

2025-S172

- Introduced

- ○ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ○ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Relates to increasing short-term disability benefits

December 19, 2024

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Jessica Ramos**

Do you support this bill?