



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Sen. Shelley Mayer Team Up for Fifth Annual Earth Week Initiative

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS April 29, 2025

| ISSUE: **EARTH DAY**



Yonkers, NY — In celebration of Earth Week, New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Senator Shelley Mayer partnered with the Westchester Parks Foundation to lead a Youth Advisory Council (YAC) cleanup and beautification project at Tibbetts Brook Park in Yonkers on Saturday.

Forty student members from the Senators' Youth Advisory Councils came together to make a lasting impact on the local environment. The students heard from Westchester County Parks Commissioner, Kathleen O'Connor, and Joe Stout, the Executive Director of the Westchester Parks Foundation. YAC members then worked on a variety of tasks, including spreading mulch around playgrounds and clearing rocks and debris from tree beds to help newly planted trees grow. The students also removed 85 pounds of litter and waste from the park.

"I have looked forward to sponsoring and attending this event for the past five years, and I was so disappointed that I had to miss it due to State Budget negotiations in Albany. But I know they did a wonderful job, and we are so proud of these incredible young people. Their hard work directly complements the efforts we are making in Albany to pass strong legislation to protect New York's vital resources and natural environments," **said Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins.** "I thank the Westchester Parks Foundation for organizing their Pitch In For Parks event and providing opportunities for our community to come together and make a real difference."

Senator Shelley Mayer said, "I am so pleased that members of my Youth Advisory Council, led by my Director of Constituent Services and Community Affairs, Christine Fils-Aime, and Constituent Services and Community Affairs Associate, Luis Ochoa, were able to join Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins's office and the Westchester Parks Foundation for the Tibbetts Brook Park Clean-Up. We are fortunate to live in an area surrounded by beautiful nature, and it is important that we do our part to preserve it. I am grateful to the young leaders of our community who took the time this weekend to help keep our community clean. Thank you to Leader Stewart-Cousins, the Westchester Youth Alliance, the White Plains Youth Bureau, and the Westchester Parks Foundation for your partnership."

“It makes you feel even better, knowing we are making a tangible difference for so many children who come here and play all the time, to create a better environment for them to have a better time in the future,” **said YAC member Adam Fayaz, a student at Pleasantville High School** who participated in spreading mulch across playground spaces.

“I really thank the Majority Leader and Senator Mayer for their youth groups being here. Getting kids involved in civics is an important life lesson, and specifically coming to this park, Tibbets Park in Yonkers, which is one of the most heavily-used parks in Westchester. The turnout was really great and for these kids to come in and help is just a great thing,” **said Joe Stout, Executive Director of the Westchester Parks Foundation.**

Senate Advances Slate of Environmental Protections in Observance of Earth Week

In addition to the local Earth Week event, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins led the Senate in passing a major legislative package to protect natural resources and the environment. The [package of bills](#), passed last week, focuses on keeping our air and water clean, helping communities transition to clean energy, and protecting children's health. Highlights include:

- Setting stronger limits on toxic air pollution and monitoring air quality around industrial sites.
- Providing aid for municipalities and stakeholder groups to clean up lakes and improve water quality.
- Offering financial help to homeowners to switch from oil and propane heating to clean electric heat pumps.
- Making sure playground materials are safe by banning harmful chemicals like PFAS, PAHs, and lead.

- Requiring companies to test and report on PFAS, a dangerous chemical, in their wastewater.
- Planning for a just transition away from the oldest and most polluting fossil fuel power plants by 2030.
- Ensuring that communities near major projects have a stronger voice during the environmental review process.
- Banning oil and gas drilling on New York’s protected state lands.

“Protecting our environment is one of the most important responsibilities we have,” **said Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins**. “These legislative actions, paired with the community spirit we saw at Tibbetts Brook Park, show that New York is committed to a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable future.”