



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins Honors 2025 Woman of Distinction Stephanie Gabaud

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS May 16, 2025



(Albany, NY) – New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins proudly honored Stephanie Gabaud at the 2025 New York State Senate Women of Distinction Ceremony on Tuesday in Albany. Stephanie, a resident of the Elizabeth Seton Children's Center in Yonkers, was selected for her extraordinary advocacy, unwavering courage, and transformative leadership on behalf of medically complex children and young adults.

The annual Women of Distinction celebration, hosted by the New York State Senate, recognizes outstanding women from across New York who have made meaningful contributions to their communities, broken barriers, and uplifted others through service, leadership, and perseverance.

“Stephanie Gabaud is a shining example of what it means to be a Woman of Distinction,” **said Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins**. “Her strength, spirit, and dedication to advocating for medically complex young people is nothing short of heroic. Despite facing tremendous health challenges since birth, Stephanie has become a national and international voice for change, a compassionate leader, and an inspiration to all who meet her. I am honored to recognize her with this well-deserved award.”

“Being honored as a Woman of Distinction by the New York State Senate was truly one of the best days of my life and brought me to tears,” **said Woman of Distinction Stephanie Gabaud**.

“It was made even more special because it came from my mentor and inspiration, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins. This award – and the incredible women I share it with – makes me realize how change comes from believing that even one voice can make a difference. This award isn’t just recognition... it’s motivation to keep going for young adults like me who need the Elizabeth Seton Children’s future young adult center as a home to call their own.”

Stephanie has lived at Elizabeth Seton Children’s Center since she was just three months old, courageously confronting a lifetime of serious medical conditions, including spina bifida, Arnold-Chiari malformation, and hydrocephalus. She has endured numerous surgeries and procedures, yet continues to face each day with resilience and hope – drawing strength from her deep love of music, art, and service.

Stephanie is now the International Spokesperson for Elizabeth Seton Children's Center and an Associate of the Sisters of Charity of New York, advocating for young adults with serious medical needs who face life-or-death consequences when they lose access to pediatric care when they turn 21 – a problem known as the “aging-out” crisis.

Stephanie helped lead the effort to create the first skilled nursing facility in the U.S. designed just for young adults with complex health conditions. In 2024, she was named a Westchester Magazine Healthcare Hero for her hard work. She continues to inspire and guide others at the Children's Center. Her story shows how one person's voice can make a big difference in improving care for those who need it most.

“Watching Stephanie receive the honor as a New York State Senate Woman of Distinction by Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins was a moment I'll always remember,” **said Elizabeth Seton Children's Center CEO Pat Tursi.** “The spirit of love, strength and shared purpose in the room was palpable. It was humbling to be in the presence of such remarkable women. Every honoree is driven not by recognition, but rather by a desire to uplift their communities, advocate for the greater good and help build a better future – not only in their communities, but across our State and throughout the world. I am truly inspired by their stories, their resilience and the collective power of women leading with heart, integrity and vision.”

###

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** May 16, 2025 | **Contact:** Gregory Totino, (518) 391-5107;

[totino@nysenate.gov](mailto:totino@nysenate.gov)