



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins Partners With AARP To Inform Grandparent Caregivers About Financial Assistance Program

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS March 11, 2010

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Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, in partnership with the Kinship Caregiver Program, is working to inform residents about financial assistance available to grandparents and other relatives raising children. The individuals currently enrolled in the program receive an average of \$400 per month to care for a child and \$150 for any additional children. However, due to limited awareness about this program, it is estimated that only 10% of New Yorkers who qualify for assistance apply to the program.

Established in 2006, New York State Kinship Caregiver Program was created by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to assist individuals caring for children in the absence of a parent. The program allows community-based organizations to serve the many needs of caregivers and the children in their care, providing support groups, education, counseling and other important services. A recent study has shown that children in the Kinship Caregiver Program have a lower tendency for behavioral issues than children in traditional foster care.

“Grandparents and other relatives care for over 300,000 children in New York State,” said Gerald Wallace of the NYS Kinship Caregiver Program. “Most of these children would be in foster care but for the assistance of relatives. This informal child welfare system gets better

outcomes for children at a fraction of the cost of foster care. It makes sense to support kinship families by supporting programs that assist them.”

“The Kinship Caregiver Program can remove the financial burden as well as other obstacles that prevent people from becoming caregivers to their grandchildren. I encourage anyone that is currently raising a grandchild to contact the Kinship Navigator for more information,” concluded Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

The AARP has been a leading advocate for the Kinship Caregiver Program and has partnered with Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins to provide information on the benefits available. Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins is currently working with the AARP to develop awareness events throughout the district and has made information available online.

For more information on the eligibility requirements, please contact the New York State Kinship Navigator at 1-877-454-6463 or New York State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins at 1-914-423-4031.