



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Legislation to Establish Maximum Temperatures in School Buildings and Indoor Facilities

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS June 25, 2008

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--Recent heat wave resulted in intolerable and unhealthy classroom conditions--

NY State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-35th District) and Assemblymen Mike Spano (D-I-C 93rd District) and Jose Pretlow (D-I-C 87th District) announced today that they have introduced joint legislation in the New York State Legislature to establish a minimum and maximum temperature in school buildings and indoor facilities throughout New York State – to ensure that excessive temperatures do not create health and safety risks to students, faculty members and school employees.

Yonkers Federation of Teachers President, Patricia Puleo, informed legislators during the heat wave two weeks ago that classroom temperatures ranged from 94 to 101 degrees, and that at least one teacher was hospitalized because her asthma was aggravated by the excessive heat. There were numerous complaints of students passing out and becoming physically ill because of the unsafe and unhealthy conditions. “This legislation, so quickly drafted and introduced, by our local legislators will prevent a repeat of the intolerable conditions that were experienced two weeks ago, and moreover, will prevent a potential tragedy in the future,” President Puleo said. “I commend Senator Stewart-Cousins and Assemblymen Spano and Pretlow for taking quick, decisive action on this important issue.”

“Our children all deserve an excellent education in New York State – in an optimum classroom and learning environment. Classroom temperatures that exceed 94 degrees are, simply said, dangerous – unhealthy and unsafe - for students and teachers. This legislation enables administrators to cancel or close schools – without any penalties – in the event of unseasonably high temperatures, which we experienced earlier this month. Astonishingly, while there are laws that determine how we treat our pets in terms of heat exposure, to date, there aren’t any laws that protect our children or educators from excessive heat in schools” stated Andrea Senator Stewart-Cousins.

“The classroom conditions that were described during the recent heat wave were intolerable, and must be prevented from occurring again the future,” Assemblyman Spano said.

S.8716 / and a companion bill in the Assembly has been introduced in both houses of the New York State Legislature and it is anticipated that it will move when both houses go back into session.