



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Weekly Update from the Desk of Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins: Week of 2/11/11 to 2/18/11

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS February 18, 2011

### *From Albany*

“WOMEN WORKING IT” WORKSHOP: Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins has organized a business workshop for women at the annual Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus weekend. The workshop, which is taking place on Saturday, February 19 at 1:00 PM, in Meeting Room 6 of the Empire State Plaza Concourse, will offer valuable information to women entrepreneurs and business owners. The panelists include Teri Coaxum, Regional Advocate for the Small Business Administration; Yrthya Dinzey-Flores, Chief Diversity Officer for Governor Andrew Cuomo, Quenia Abreu, President & CEO of New York Women’s Chamber and other successful women business owners and government partners.

LEGISLATURE AUTHORIZES VILLAGES TO USE LEVER VOTING MACHINES: This week, the Senate passed S. 3216, co-sponsored by Senator Stewart-Cousins, which allows villages throughout the State of New York to use lever voting machines for local elections until December 31, 2012. The legislation has already passed the Assembly and must receive Governor Cuomo’s signature to become law.

GOVERNOR CUOMO INTRODUCES INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING BILL: Governor Andrew Cuomo introduced legislation this week to create an independent redistricting commission. Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins issued this statement in support: “Governor Cuomo's legislation is a crucial step towards a more fair, transparent and independent redistricting process. By creating an independent commission, we will ensure that this government is more representative of its people and not the party that happens to be in power at that time. I signed Mayor Koch's pledge last fall to end the practice of gerrymandering and I expect that the rest of my colleagues who also did so will join me in supporting Governor Cuomo's legislation.”

LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS OVERBURDENED YONKERS CITY COURT: Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins introduced S. 3265 this week, which authorizes the City of Yonkers to have seven City Court Judges, one more than currently allowed by law. The Senator's legislation, which was recommended by the New York State Unified Court System, will ease the backlog of cases that exists in Yonkers City Court. Yonkers is the largest City in Westchester County and the fourth largest in the State, and the City Court handles cases ranging from the most serious criminal felonies to minor traffic violations. With just six City Judges, this caseload has overburdened the court. By allowing a seventh judge, this legislation will ensure that justice is served in a timely manner.

SENATE DEMOCRATS UNVEIL ETHICS REFORM LEGISLATION: Senate Democrats this week urged passage of an ethics reform package, which will create an independent redistricting commission, require legislators to disclose their outside incomes and improve transparency in campaign financing. At the press conference, Senator Stewart-Cousins spoke of the significance of these reforms, and added “we owe it to the public to pass this ethics package so that New Yorkers have a government that they are proud of.”

*From the District*

ISSUES PROCLAMATIONS FOR 'TRAILBLAZERS': Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins presented proclamations from the New York State Senate to three prominent Westchester residents who were honored this week at the Annual Westchester County Trailblazer's Program. The proclamations were issued in recognition of Pennye W. Nash, co-owner and executive director of Sancia Health Care Inc; Wiley C. Harrison, owner of The Business of Your Business (BYB) in White Plains; and Judge Kathie E. Davidson, Supervising Judge for the Westchester Family Courts and Acting Supreme Court Justice in the Ninth Judicial District.

ANNOUNCES "COFFEE AND CONVERSATION" AT MT. PLEASANT LIBRARY: Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins will hold a "Coffee and Conversation" at the Mt. Pleasant Public Library on Saturday March 12 at 10:30 AM with Westchester County Legislator John Nonna. This is the first in a series of "Coffee and Conversation" events that will take place around her district throughout the spring. Members of the community are invited to enjoy coffee and speak with the Senator and other participating Legislators about any topic. To RSVP please contact John Tomlin at 914-423-4031.

SPEAKS AT SAUNDERS HIGH SCHOOL FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH: Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins spoke to juniors and seniors at Saunders High School this week, covering a range of topics including civics and the importance of registering to vote.

READS TO CHILDREN AT GREENBURGH BARNES AND NOBLE: Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins read to children at the invitation of Greenburgh Barnes and Noble on Tarrytown Road this week, in honor of Black History Month. The Senator read three books to a group gathered in the children's section of the bookstore.