



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Statement on Passage of Marriage Equality

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS June 24, 2011

The New York State Legislature approved an historic marriage equality bill that will allow gay and lesbian couples to marry in the State of New York. Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D/I/WF- 35th District), who voted in favor of the bill, released this statement:

"This is an historic day for New Yorkers. As the world watched, the legislature took a stand and declared that discrimination is not acceptable in any form to any person or group. Tomorrow, same sex couples will wake up knowing that this government recognizes them as equal citizens of New York and they can take comfort in the fact that their right to a civil marriage in New York State will be granted.

"Civil marriage is a relationship sanctioned and licensed by the State and it provides protections, rights, responsibilities, obligations and benefits that gay couples have the same right to enjoy as different sex couples. It is important to note that this bill includes strong religious exemptions to respect the beliefs of clergy and religious organizations.

"I was proud to support marriage equality because loving and willing gay couples deserve the freedom to get married. Once again, New York has shown itself to be a leader in advancing the cause of freedom and equality to all people"

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