



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

## Why Didn't We Come Together, where was Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins?

RUBEN DIAZ August 14, 2014

What You Should Know

By Senator Rev. Rubén Díaz

32nd Senatorial District

718-991-3161

### **Why Didn't We Come Together, where was Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins?**

You should know that this week, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has been quoted again and again in the media about his visit to Israel with Senator Dean Skelos, Senator Jeff Klein and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver saying: "The fact that we came at this time, the fact that we came together. They understood this was not the usual state delegation. That was not lost on them and I think they were very appreciative."

You should know that even though now more than ever, every gesture of support for Israel is crucial, the New York State Senate was not properly represented in Israel. Senator Dean Skelos represented the Senate Republican Conference, and Senator Jeff Klein represented the Senate Independent Conference, but no one accompanied the State Legislative Delegation to Israel on behalf of the Regular Senate Democratic Conference. No one from

the Senate Democratic Conference even showed up on this mission to Israel to voice our support for Israel, so "we" did not, in fact, come together.

This was, as Governor Andrew Cuomo said "not the usual state delegation." A State Delegation would properly include the leaders, and since the State Senate is divided into three Conferences, all three of these Conferences should have been represented. They were not.

Was the Senate Democratic Conference Leader Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins even invited to travel to Israel with Governor Andrew Cuomo and her fellow Senate Leaders? If Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins was invited and refused to go - or for some reason was unable to travel to Israel with the State Leadership Delegation - was it not possible for the Senate Deputy Democratic Conference Leader Mike Gianaris to take her place so at least someone could represent us to show our solidarity with Israel?

We all know that Senate Republican Leader Dean Skelos and Senate IDC Leader Jeff Klein met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Reuven Rivlin, Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon, IDF Chief of Staff Benny Gantz, and Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat to express their solidarity with Israel. On a trip of this magnitude, where was the Leader from the Regular Senate Democratic Conference? What does this say about the regular Senate Democrats and our partnership with Israel?

Ladies and gentlemen, like most of my colleagues in the State Senate, I believe that Israel needs our support, too. I just can't understand why the State Delegation did not come together so all three Senate Conferences - the Senate Republican Conference, the Senate Democratic Conference, and the Senate Independence Conference - could stand beside the other State Leaders to reinforce the strong ties that bind New York and the State of Israel.

This is Senator Rev. Rubén Díaz, and this is what you should know.