



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

# **Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins Should Have a Seat at the Table with the 3 Men in a Room**

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What You Should Know

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## **Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins Should Have a Seat at the Table with the 3 Men in a Room**

You should know that Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins is a bright, well-educated, articulate, intelligent, professional, beloved and highly respected African-American woman who has been elected to serve as the Leader of the Senate Democratic Conference. The experience that Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins has had in her professional and personal life overshadows most other Senators by far.

New York State's political history has been comprised of 3-Men-in-a-Room: the

Governor of New York State, the Majority Leader of the State Senate, and the Speaker of the Assembly. Those three men - for years and years and years - are the ones who shut themselves in a room and decide what is good for the State, and determine the Budget that will service 20 million people in the State of New York.

Never, EVER has a woman been part of those negotiations. The process has been completely chauvinistic.

Now, on the other hand, we have a Governor who prides himself in establishing things that no one else has ever done. He takes great pride in being a Governor who got gay marriage laws passed. He prides himself in passing the budget on time for 4 years in a row. He is the one who got the Women's Equality Party on the ballot as a political party in order to show his support for women.

This year, the Governor is again pushing for the Women's Equality Act to pass with all 10 points, which include Achieve Pay Equity; Stop Sexual Harassment in All Workplaces; and Stop Human Trafficking. Two contentious points the Governor is fighting for are for more abortions, including late-term abortions.

My dear reader, it seems to me that a person who prides himself on being such a champion for women, and that same person does things that have never been achieved before in New York State, should realize this great opportunity. Governor Andrew Cuomo can demonstrate his real interest in achieving women's equality by inviting Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins to join him and the other two men in that room during Budget negotiations because she is, in fact, a Leader of 30 Democratic Senators in the State.

You should know that when we talk about a Leader of a Conference, we are not talking about someone who is the Leader of a group of 5 or 10 people. We are talking about someone who is the Leader of 30 Democratic Senators who represents millions of people from downstate to upstate to Long Island to Western New York to Central New York. No other so-called minority represents all of those Senators and as many people in the State - and she's also a woman.

This is the right time, 2015 - the 20th Anniversary of United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women - for Governor Andrew Cuomo to establish another record and set a precedent for the advancement for women in the New York State.

Ladies and gentlemen, in my humble opinion, I submit that Governor Andrew Cuomo can make history in New York State by welcoming Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins - a Leader - as equal to the other 2 men who will be in the room. To do this will be a great accomplishment for the rights of women AND for the 30 Democratic Senators who she represents. To not do this will leave an accomplished woman who represents 30 Democratic Senators in New York State locked outside the door while the 3 men make all of the decisions for New York State.

You should know that because of my religious beliefs, I have had disagreements with Senator Stewart-Cousins in the past. If I, with my disagreements with her, believe that the Governor should invite her into Budget negotiations, then I have to ask: "What about those women's organizations, elected officials and unions that are big supporters of women? Do they think that this is the right thing to do?"

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