



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins Statement Regarding Juneteenth, Commemorating the End of Slavery

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS June 20, 2014

Today is June 19th, and on this Juneteenth, celebrated as Black Independence Day by African-Americans, I pause to commemorate the end of slavery. In 1862, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation but it took close to three more years before all slaves were freed.

On June 19, 1865, a General arrived in Texas to issue the order, officially freeing America's final slaves. Juneteenth is a reminder of freedom for African-Americans, and I reflect on the legacy of my ancestors who with perseverance and dignity moved beyond the bonds of slavery to thrive. I am proud to stand on their shoulders as the first female Democratic leader of a legislative conference in New York State and the first African-American to preside over the New York State Senate. Juneteenth is an historic part of our fabric of life, and the struggle that continues today for racial equality.