



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Senator Stewart-Cousins' Leadership Recognized by 914Inc.

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS November 24, 2015



“You can help people realize their potential if you just remove the obstacles and barriers.”

Tarrytown, NY - Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins was recognized for her leadership and delivered the keynote address at 914Inc./Westchester Magazine's 5th annual Women in Business luncheon Friday in Tarrytown. The luncheon celebrated the business magazine's selection of 19 of the county's most powerful executives, entrepreneurs, nonprofit and government leaders, including the Senator herself.

During the keynote address, Senator Stewart-Cousins focused on the shared connection among the honorees and the responsibility that comes with power, to inspire and lead the

way for the next generation. “As powerful women who have made your mark, do not forget that others depend on you to pave the road, climb the ladder and raise your voice.” The New York State Legislature was founded in 1776, and in its more than 200 year history, it was not until 2012 that Senator Stewart-Cousins became the first female legislative leader.

As the Senate Democratic Leader, she explained, she has spent a lot of time trying to get her voice heard. This year, with the assistance of the “Pink Chair” campaign organized by the Westchester Women’s Agenda, she pushed for a seat at the budget negotiation table occupied to date by the so-called “three men in a room,” the Governor, the Senate Majority Leader and the Assembly Speaker. She spoke out on behalf of the 26 members in her conference that represent eight million of New York’s 19 million people. “The state budget should reflect the interests of all New Yorkers, especially since the majority, over 50% of the residents, are women.”



It took until this year - 2015 - for another important milestone for women to occur - a pay equity amendment that requires employers to pay women and men the same for the same work. She urged those attending to be steadfast, strong and courageous - to speak up and speak out. "Don't be comfortable. Don't be quiet. Don't think that because you've made some headway, there's nothing more to do. There are many glass ceilings to break and there are many, many mountains yet to be climbed."

As part of 914Inc.'s selection process, Senator Stewart-Cousins was asked to summarize the success she has had in her current position and in her career, citing specific accomplishments. While her list of achievements is long, one of her proudest moments occurred in her first year in the state Senate (2007), when she was able to save the Dobbs Ferry Hospital from closing by advocating for the preservation of the hundreds of jobs and local access to healthcare in her district.

Job creation and economic development are two of Senator Stewart-Cousins' top legislative priorities. She consistently votes for additional funds in the State Budget to support New York State's Regional Economic Development Councils that have invested over \$77 million in Westchester County since 2011. Yonkers received \$2.5 million this year to continue the Saw Mill River Daylighting project downtown. With her support in 2014, the Tarrytown-based biomedical research company Regeneron received \$8.5 million in tax credits to expand their corporate headquarters and create hundreds of additional high-tech jobs. She also assisted Kawasaki Rail Car Inc. in securing a \$500,000 state grant that helped the company purchase its factory and keep 375 manufacturing jobs.

The Senator is also an advocate for small businesses and minority and women-owned enterprises (MWBES). In 2010, Senator Stewart-Cousins co-chaired the Senate Democratic Task Force on MWBE that was instrumental in getting four transformative bills passed and signed into law. These measures created a combination of more favorable circumstances or

situations for these companies that previously did not exist. As a result, within the last five years, minority and women-owned business enterprises participation in state contracts has grown substantially from several percentage points to more than 23%.

In closing, Senator Stewart-Cousins challenged her fellow honorees - all considered leaders in their respective fields - and all women in general to not rest on their laurels. "It doesn't matter where you start, it really matters where you end."