



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Senator Stewart-Cousins Joins Press Conference To Promote "My Brother's Keepers"

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS September 23, 2016

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Yonkers, NY – On Wednesday, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins joined the Board of Education, Mayor Mike Spano and over 200 young men of color from Yonkers Public Schools as the school district announced its decision to embrace President Obama’s “My Brother’s Keeper” challenge.

“My Brother’s Keeper” is a national initiative which aims to improve life outcomes for young men of color. The challenge calls upon schools to engage families and communities in appropriate and respectful ways to ensure that young men of color are given equitable access to high quality schools, programs and support services.

The 2016-2017 State Budget includes a \$20 million investment in support of this initiative. New York’s program provides grant opportunities in four categories: planning and execution of the My Brother’s Keeper Challenge; a Teacher Opportunity Corps, which bolsters the retention of qualified teachers in high-need areas who reflect the diversity of the school districts they work in; improving family engagement throughout communities; and developing practices that exhibit cultural responsiveness to the needs of young men of color.

Yonkers joins many communities throughout the state that have formally embraced the challenge, including New Rochelle, one of the first cities in the nation to have accepted it. The City of Yonkers will have the opportunity to apply for state grants as officials and stakeholders make plans to tackle the challenge.

The goals of “My Brother’s Keeper” include ensuring that kids enter school ready to learn; that all children can read at grade level by third grade; that kids graduate from high school prepared to enter college or the workforce; preparing kids to complete postsecondary education or training; and reducing violence and providing second chances for kids who have gotten into trouble.

“I am the mother of black sons,” said Senator Stewart-Cousins. “I know that young men and boys of color continue to face persistent hardships. By embracing this challenge, the City of Yonkers has committed itself to improving the lives of young men of color, and that’s a great first step, but we must tackle this challenge as a community. I am my brother’s keeper – and I hope you’ll be, too.”