

Andrea Stewart-Cousins Elected Senate Minority Leader

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Andrea Stewart-Cousins is the new head of the Senate Democrats. The Westchester Senator was elected by a 19-6 vote over Sen. John Sampson and is the first woman to head a legislative conference in New York State.

"I will work with my colleagues in the Republican and IDC Coalition to ensure that the progressive issues that both the Governor and our conference believe in are advanced. I want to thank Sen. Sampson for all his hard work and his dedication to the Senate Democratic Conference and to the people of New York," Cousins said in a statement.

Sampson took over as the head of the conference from Sen. Malcolm Smith in June 2009 after the Senate Coup. A number of Democrats expressed that they felt the vote would help move the conference forward from the association with the troubled period when the conference was in the majority.

Here are statements from a number of Senate Democrats: "I look forward to working with Leader Stewart Cousins as we move the Democratic Conference forward serving all New Yorkers. The people of New York want a progressive and democratic agenda and that is what the Democratic Conference under the leadership of Senator Stewart Cousins will provide," stated Senator John Sampson.

Senator Eric Adams said, "New Yorkers deserve a state government that responds to them, not the special interests. That is why I am so pleased that Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins will lead our conference and together we will advance the progressive legislative agenda called for by the residents of this great state."

Senator Joe Addabbo said, "I commend our new Democratic Conference leader, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, for her dedication to the conference and the hard working men and women of New York State. I look forward to working with her to advance the progressive agenda the voters sent us to Albany to achieve."

Senator Tony Avella said, “The Senate Democratic Conference has been instrumental in the fight for common-sense, progressive legislation. Senator Stewart-Cousins will continue that proud tradition as she leads our conference into the upcoming legislative session.”

Senator Neil Breslin said, “I applaud Senator Stewart-Cousins on becoming the next leader of the Senate Democratic Conference. The people of New York expect progressive leadership from their state representatives, and under Senator Stewart-Cousins, that is exactly what we are going to ensure gets done.”

Senator Ruben Diaz, Sr. said, “Senator Stewart-Cousins will be an excellent leader for our conference, and will be a powerful voice for good government. The residents of New York State need a leader like Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins to represent their interests, and I am honored to serve with her.”

Senator Martin Dilan stated, “I congratulate Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and look forward to helping her stand up for the working men and women of New York.”

Senator Adriano Espaillat, said, “Under Conference Leader Stewart-Cousins, Senate Democrats will continue to be a powerful voice for New York’s working families. I look forward to working with Senator Stewart-Cousins to continue to grow the Democratic conference and apply progressive solutions to move our state forward.”

Senator Mike Gianaris said, “I want to give my immense thanks to John Sampson for his leadership and I look forward to working with Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins. Her historic election will help move our conference forward and help us pass the progressive agenda that we successfully ran on and the people of New York have demanded.”

Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson said, “I am proud to join my Democratic colleagues on this historic occasion in applauding our new Conference Leader, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins. Senator Stewart-Cousins has been an excellent public servant, and I am confident she will be an exceptional leader for our conference.”

Senator Tim Kennedy said, “Senator Stewart-Cousins has been a voice for the underserved and a champion for working families. Today she earned her place in history by becoming the first female, African-American Minority Leader in New York State history. I look forward to working with her and continuing to move this state in a new direction by championing issues that are important to Western New Yorkers.”

Senator Liz Krueger said, “Senator Stewart-Cousins will ensure that New York remains committed to a progressive agenda. She has been a great Senator and I know will be a great Conference Leader.”

Senator Velmanette Montgomery said, “Senator Stewart-Cousins will be an excellent leader for the Senate Democratic Conference and I commend her on her new position. I look forward

to working with her, and all of my Democratic colleagues to protect the interests of all New Yorkers, not the privileged few.â€

Senator Kevin Parker said, â€I commend Senator Stewart-Cousins and join with my colleagues in supporting her as our new Conference leader. Under Senator Stewart-Cousins we will continue to be outspoken advocates for those New Yorkers who need a progressive state government the most.â€

Senator Jose Peralta said, â€I am proud to support Senator Stewart-Cousins as Democratic Conference Leader. This next session will be extremely important and we must work together to ensure the people of New York have a strong voice fighting for them in Albany to increase the minimum wage and enact common sense gun laws.â€

Senator Bill Perkins said, â€I look forward to working with our new leader, Senator Stewart-Cousins, and all of my colleagues in the State Senate to ensure that New Yorkers receive the effective state government they deserve.â€

Senator Gustavo Rivera said, â€As someone who helped work to elect Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, I am particularly proud today to join my colleagues in the Democratic conference in selecting Andrea Stewart-Cousins as our new leader. Together, we will fight to advance the progressive agenda New Yorkers so clearly have called by overwhelmingly voting for Democrats this past election.â€

Senator Jose Serrano said, â€I commend Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins and look forward to serving with her as our new Democratic Conference leader. The residents of New York have repeatedly called for progressive leadership, and that is exactly what Senator Stewart-Cousins, and the entire Democratic Conference, will provide.â€

Senator Daniel Squadron said â€Today we made history, electing the first woman leader of a New York legislative conference. I look forward to working with Senator Stewart-Cousinsâ€™ leadership to continue to move forward the progressive foundation that Senator Sampson has built.â€

Senator Toby Stavisky said, Senator Stewart-Cousins will be the first female legislative leader in New York State history, and I am honored to serve with her. Senator Stewart-Cousins will be an excellent leader for the Democratic conference and I commend her for her dedication to the conference and residents of New York.â€

Senator-Elect Terry Gipson said, â€I am eager to get to Albany and fight for my constituents. I am honored to support Senator Stewart-Cousins as Democratic Conference Leader.â€

Senator-Elect George Latimer said, â€I served with Democratic Leader Stewart-Cousins in both the State Legislature and the Westchester County Legislature and I know that she will be a strong voice for Democratic values.â€

Senator-Elect Brad Hoylman said, â€I look forward to taking my place in the State Senate this

January to begin representing the interests of all my constituents. I am proud to be part of an historic first for New York State Government. With Senator Stewart-Cousins as our leader, I am confident that together with my Democratic colleagues we will give New Yorkers the progressive government they deserve. I commend Senator Sampson for laying the groundwork for our conference's further success.

Senator Elect Ted O'Brien said, "It is an honor for me to take my place alongside my Democratic Senate colleagues to select Senator Stewart-Cousins as our conference leader. I look forward to serving under her leadership and working to represent my constituents, and all New Yorkers, in the State Senate."

Senator-Elect James Sanders, Jr. said, "Senator Stewart-Cousins has a distinguished history fighting for those who need state government the most. I look forward to joining the Democratic Conference under her leadership, and together we will continue the struggle to give New Yorkers the government they deserve."

Senator-Elect Cecilia Tkaczyk said, "As I stand ready to complete the election process and take my place in the State Senate, I look forward to serving with Senator Stewart-Cousins as she leads the Senate Democratic Conference into the next legislative session and beyond."

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