

Scott Rechler:

Welcome to Recalibrate Reality: The Future of New York. Our guest today is Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the majority leader of the New York State Senate. In this episode, leader, Stewart-Cousins and I talk about the recently passed \$212 billion state budget, what the budget funds, as well as the tax increases included in that budget, and how she balances the needs of her caucus and a whole lot more. And so now, let's recalibrate reality with Andrea Stewart-Cousins. So, it's my pleasure to welcome to the show Senate Majority Leader Senate Majority Leader Andrew Stewart-Cousins. Leader Stewart-Cousins thank you for joining me at Recalibrate Reality.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

Oh, it's really good to be here. And thank you for inviting me.

Scott Rechler:

So you have an extraordinary position. You're the first woman, the first woman of color in a leadership position in the New York State Legislature as the Senate Majority Leader. I would just like to take a step back and understand sort of a little bit of your background, how you grew up, what you did before you got into public service, and then a little bit of your experience of time in public service and how you got to this leadership position, it's extraordinary.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

Thank you so much. How I got here, I sometimes scratch my head and ask the same question. Because I grew up in a time where I never saw me reflected in any roles like this. I grew up in New York City, we grew up in the housing projects, Amsterdam Housing to be exact. And I always tell people that we lived in the project, my dad was a world war two veteran, Purple Heart Bronze Star, he served in a segregated army. And when he came back, the GI Bill really didn't apply to him or people like him. And so we grow up in public housing. And I went to public schools, my mom typed 100 words a minute, and of course, corporations didn't hire people like her either. And so she was not able to get a job in corporate America, but she did get a job in civil service. And she wound up being the head of the steno pool for the corporation Council in New York City.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

But I didn't know that, I just knew that my parents instilled in me a faith of faith in God, a love of family and a love for education. And she always said, "No matter what, they cannot take this from you. So get it in there." And I believe it. And when I went into corporate America, I did a lot of things before I got into government. I worked for New York Tel/AT&T for 13 years, everything from customer service to sales and marketing. I only got into sales and marketing when the government forced AT&T to have a consent decree that allowed for people of color and women to move up the corporate ladder. And then from there, I wound up teaching and I got married and had kids and I wound up teaching, I was a marketing professional, I did a lot of different things. And then I moved to Yonkers with my husband and one child at that time.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

And I didn't know anything about Yonkers, other than there were trees, and it was close to the city. And we were trying to just kind of slow down life a little bit. And the next thing I know, we're in the middle of a desegregation lawsuit in the 1980s. And it was shocking to me that in New York, there was a city that

actually was fighting desegregation, and was ordered to desegregate. And so I was involved with the NAACP, I also got involved in politics at that time, a good friend of mine who still works with me and for me, was running to be the first African American woman city councilperson in Yonkers, and that was coincident with the mayoral race, there were three candidates, only one actually wanted to desegregate. So I spent my volunteer time first helping my friend who won her primary and then all of the candidates who decided to comply with the desegregation order. And the mayor that I supported Terry Zaleski won, and after he won, he asked me to join his team.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

And when I got into government, I realized that the same government who had my dad serving in segregated army, wouldn't allow him to take advantage of the GI Bill was the same government that provided public housing. It was the same government that provided public education. The same government that didn't tell corporations that my mother should be employed, was the same government that had a civil service exam that allowed her to move up the ladder. The same government that allowed for poor Yonkers to be segregated and all these other cities all across this country to be segregated, was the same government that said, "Now, you must desegregate." So I realized that it's not the government, it's the vision that you bring and it's the people who bring their experiences with them.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

So once I got into government and I started doing a lot of different things, opening the door, because that was my job really to make government accessible for people, I realized that if I was going to be in government, I could make a difference in people's lives. And what I wanted to do was remove the barriers to people actually being able to achieve their potential. And I then ran for county legislator, which I won and I served there for about 10 years, ran for senate, lost my first race by 18 votes in the longest undecided race in New York state history. They told me in February of the following year that I lost my 18. And then I ran again and won. And I was then elected by my peers to be the minority leader in 2012, and the majority leader in 2019.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

So it has been, as I said startling to me, as to many other people. But I see it as a privilege, I am humbled by the opportunity. And I always remember the journey, so that I can remember why I have been given the opportunities and really proceed in many ways, I hope to remove barriers so that other people won't have to walk a road that government is putting hurdles in front of them as they travel.

Scott Rechler:

Yeah. Well, that's some story of public service. And so we're fortunate to have you there. It's interesting, as you were speaking about government and the importance of government of good government of well intentioned government. I think for many of us, this past 18 months of living through this battle with COVID, gave us a whole new appreciation of how important good government and good leadership is. I know you were at the epicenter in leadership in the state in Albany, as well as the New Rochelle early in our crisis where COVID struck first. Maybe share a little bit of how that frame sort of your perspective in terms of the response to COVID and those early days and your thought about what does this mean, you become the Senate majority leader with all these grand plans and COVID comes and says, "No, it's going to be different." How did that change your thought process?

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

At the center of my plans, are always how do I figure out how to best help people? So, that's always the center of what I'm trying to do. And then when COVID hit, we didn't know what to think, but we knew that it was a tsunami, based on what we had seen so far, that was coming in our direction. And it was the first time actually that I called back my conference, we had already adjourned for the day. And I'd spoken with the governor and so on. And it seemed like we were really, as I said, in the eye of a big storm. So I called him back, and we were able to pass that evening, I think the first \$40 million and allowed him emergency powers so that he would be nimble. So that the government would be nimble in the face of this disease, which we understood was lethal.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

And so I was very happy, that was one of those times that I was happy that we acted when we did the assembly also came back in, because the very next day was the first case in Westchester, and it was in New Rochelle. And as you know, I represent part of New Rochelle. And sure enough, that was not only the first case, but it was a super spreader case. And it really made New Rochelle, the epicenter, so I was really glad that we had acted quickly. Everything was like get it done, keep the Department of Health working, batten down the hatches and let's just you buckle up for this ride. And here we are. And as you know, we are still... We thank God, we do have vaccines, but we all know that we still have a way to go and that we have to really be careful. And meanwhile, we have to, as you say, recalibrate.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

What do we do? How do we make sure that what we've learned over this past year, certainly about how prepared we are, as you said in the healthcare system, how prepared we are in terms of our own resources here in New York State? And also during that summer we had the twin viruses, as I say because there was what we all began to understand about racism and what we began to understand about the inequities of a system that unfortunately, in many ways is rooted in that racism, and how does that play out. And so it just isn't enough to say, "Okay, we're on the other side of this," you have to address the things that again, government can address, the things that we know everybody wants. And I have a very, very diverse district. And I'm able to serve my diverse district because everybody really wants the same thing. They want opportunities, they want to have safety, they want to have affordable and clean housing, they want to have opportunities to be educated, they need health care. It's really not that hard.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

And of course, we need a planet to live on. Because without that, then everything else is kind of moved. So how do we look at the inequities? And how do we start saying, "Yes, we have to recover, we have to recalibrate. But do we turn a blind eye to things that we know have created such a kind of fractured and such a schism in our society?" And I'm happy that I believe in this budget, we as a legislature, and we as government, frankly, took a look at some of those things, some of those long enduring inequities and just began to start addressing them.

Scott Rechler:

Yeah. As you think about COVID, it really was an accelerant that gives us an opportunity to sort of hit the reset button. And a lot of the challenges that may have been bubbling below the surface, surfaced upward for all of us to see and experience and the inequities as you described, the challenges with our healthcare systems and the strain that they were under, and the lack of coordination along the way, and so many different other areas. So it is a moment where we can rebuild back better, stronger, more

equitable, more sustainable than before. And I think you brought up the budget. So this was an interesting budget time, because I remember we were speaking to you in January, and it was... Georgia still hadn't been decided. So it was a question as to how friendly a Washington we're going to have or not have, how wide a gap was the state budget going to have or not have? And it was anywhere from a gap people talking as low as six billion dollars, to as high as \$15 billion in terms of where that was.

Scott Rechler:

But Georgia went for the Democrats, and we as New Yorkers got fortunate to have Senator Schumer the majority leader who delivered back to our state great fiscal support, to help us get there. So [inaudible 00:12:52] evolved into this budget negotiation, you went from a large deficit to that deficit being more than I guess, filled by the fiscal support, the federal support that we got. And then began to be forward thinking. So, maybe share in terms of some of the priorities that you focused on, relative to knowing that we had a stable budget, but what we were looking to do beyond that?

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

Yeah. Well, thank you. As I was speaking, and as we were both speaking about COVID, I just wanted to take a moment to say to anyone who lost a loved one, because this is really at the heart of it, so much loss happened in so many of our communities. And I want to obviously send condolences. Personally, I went to more weeks and more virtual weeks than I'd ever had to attend in my life, in the public eye. So it has been really, really devastating. In terms of the budget, yeah. But what people may not realize, is that we were entering this budget cycle before COVID with a six billion dollar deficit. That was the conversation even going in. And that has been the only conversation that I've had with governing in the past. It's going to be four or five years. Every year, there's a deficit, every year there's a deficit, and we're always coming in with a deficit.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

And so the vision of really getting a handle on some of those inequities, some of those adjustments that really shouldn't happen, never actually took place, because we were always starting from where's the austerity? Where do we cut? When I ran in 2004, I ran with two things in mind. I ran with the understanding that the Brennan center had given us back then, that New York State and the most dysfunctional legislature in the country, that bothered me a lot. And then the second thing was this thing called a campaign for fiscal equity, which was a lawsuit that was taken up by parents of kids who were in schools predominantly black and brown, but these schools have been under resourced by the state. They went to court and they said, "Look, because my school is..." The kids are in... I don't know whether it's poor area. Whatever it is, it's being under resourced. And the courts agreed. And New York State owed billions of dollars to these schools that were predominantly black and brown. And New York State wouldn't pay it.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

And that bothered me a lot. Because again, I went to public schools, my kids went to public schools. I've taught in public school. That was one of my jobs too. I was a journalist, I was a teacher. I've done a lot of things before I showed up here. And I know when societies shuts you out, education is the only answer. And the idea that every year it was a deferral bothered me. And when I came in, Eliot Spitzer was willing to pay the money that was due and had figured out a plan and Eliot Spitzer was gone in about a year and a half. And then when Governor Paterson came in, he also came in and followed right behind him was the great recession. And so that money never got paid in the formula. And indeed, money was taken

from schools. And then when Governor Cuomo came in, he did as we were building back, we did do the gap elimination, we returned that money to the schools, but the resources targeting the neediest schools did not happen.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

And so this year was the year that we were able to actually target the neediest school to make a commitment for three years to fund the foundation aid formula, the way it was supposed to be funded, and get the resources to the under-resourced schools with every school district now. We'll have at least 60% of what has been owed to them through foundation formula paying. And through the next three years, we will be at 100% for every school district in terms of what's been owed. And that's important, because the federal government and I am so grateful that our Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senator Gillibrand and our congressional [inaudible 00:17:34], I am so grateful that they came and helped us plug the holes [inaudible 00:17:40], when I got the budget, I already owed six billion dollars before COVID. So the money that we got, stabilized us, but to build that future so that we would actually be able to restore to the schools what they should have and what we also did was we expanded on this universal pre K, but universal pre K was only in New York City.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

So I believe that education for us has to be a commitment from preschool to 16. And there were areas, rural areas, areas outside of New York City, kids could really use that boost. So to offer universal pre K outside of New York City, we were able to add in this budget 210 new districts throughout the state, thousands of seats for universal pre K so that kids can get this exposure they need. And by the way, maybe a parent will be able to go to work and know that their child's in a safe place. So we really wanted to focus on education, because education really is the key, it will bring us the technology, it will bring us a competitive edge. But we can't keep pretending that if we don't invest in in our children, that we will have a future that really does keep us in front. So that was a big issue. And I'm obviously bringing business, we were able to get about a billion dollars in addition to the federal government's 2.3 billion for small businesses, we put another billion in, 800 million in cash grants, 200 and tax credit.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

So we're trying to focus on the economy, we have the mother nature bond of three billion dollars, which again will bring us infrastructure as well as addressing some of the climate change. There were a lot of things in this budget that we were able to do because we did have the stabilizer of the federal dollars, but also we have the vision of how do we educate, how do we house, how do we invest in our infrastructure? There's a lot in this budget that really I think is very, very different, but it's very future, forward looking because we are building as you said back better and stronger. And I think centering people and what their needs are as we move into a post-COVID world.

Scott Rechler:

Yeah. One of the things we had Martin and Andrea King on the Recalibrate Reality a couple of weeks ago, and they're talking about Dr. King's focus on poverty, inequality and focus on everyone having the same level of education and health care, and then obviously, access to food and nutrition. And so, there're some basic principles that one would say as a country, as strong and wealthy as the United States, it's almost horrific to think that there would even be questioned that some of these basic principles wouldn't be met by government. And I think one of the concerns is just the scale of this

budget, a record in terms of size, and then obviously, having to increase taxes to fund this, is that we live in a competitive environment.

Scott Rechler:

And while we need to address these inequities, should they be done on a federal basis, now granted, that hadn't been in the past, so we can't just stand by and watch, but we do run the risk of this competitive nature, driving away some of our taxpayers. And if you look at New York State, it's the top one percent of the wealthy taxpayers makeup 40 plus percent of our budget. And so with little bit concerning, this year is different than others, where a lot of them are already living outside of New York City or outside of New York State, they're working remotely, they can see they can do that. And then the question, do they come back to a city where they'd be paying the highest tax rate, federal state and city in the country? And then also even the perception of what's happening in New York with crime and quality of life.

Scott Rechler:

So there's a lot of weight on the branch. How do we prepare ourselves at the extent that we might lose some portion of that tax revenue, which then means that if they're not there subsidizing that large budget that we have, it's going to then flow more broadly down to the rest of the New Yorkers. How do we monitor it? How do we make sure that doesn't happen?

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

For some people, there's never a good excuse to raise taxes. And again, it's certainly not my first answer. It's never been my first answer. But again, this was a year that just is so unusual in terms of what we've ever, ever had to experience. And I can't pretend to know how people will react. But I do know that New York is still the most incredible city and state in the entire country and world as far as I'm concerned, that we have the resiliency and we have the ability to bounce back better than any other place. And that the energy that always exists in New York will allow us to face whatever the problems we have, and to be able to correct them and move on. We always do. But we do need people. And what we've seen in austerity budget after austerity budget, is that the core things that we really needed to address were not being addressed.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

And although there were a lot of people who were talking about lots and lots of ways to be able to get the revenue in order to take care of the things that so many people wanted to see taken care of, I think we were a strategic, and the people who will pay more, you have to net more than a million dollars, and it is a one percent% increase. And in terms of corporate franchise taxes, it's less than one percent of an increase. And so it was enough to give us the revenue to take care of the things that we wanted to sustain. I think it was a balanced approach. Yes, it's an increase, but as I'm explaining, it's an increase that really, we're doing because of the needs that have been exposed. Not only now, but kind of we knew. And so what I'm hoping is that people won't run away, that they will stay, they will stay and fight and build with us. And I think we will be an extraordinary model not only for the country, but for the rest of the world.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

And I also think that if people who really don't want to be part of it leave, we will get people who will come in, who will want to be part of it and continue to be a constructive part of our rehabilitation and

our resurrection. So I think we're going to be fine ultimately, I believe it. And I believe that we have the right priorities and together we will be able to achieve great things.

Scott Rechler:

And I think there's no doubt that it's the responsibility of government to ensure that we address these inequities and provide the education and health care and all the things that we've discussed. I think just the other piece of this is, it's also the responsibility to ensure that that money is spent wisely and people are held accountable. And to that point, in some of the funding programs, whether it's to education or other policies, are their performance guidelines and metrics to ensure that the money is spent effectively, and that we can take a step back and see how that was spent?

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

I represent Yonker, part of Yonkers, in White Plains, in New Rochelle Greenberg and Scarsdale. And they all have public schools, but going from one to another, it's almost as though a lot of them are in different places. So what I want is a standard public school that gives everyone the basic resources they need to compete in this environment. And people will have to report and people will be held accountable. The accountability factor is very, very clear for us and as a Senate, and as a senate leader, I want to make sure people even understand that we have had more hearings on issues. In our past year, we've had over 100 hearings, public hearings on issues that are important to people. So, we push transparency, we push accountability, we push involvement, and I think people are involved. So I think the transparency is really available, but it can always be better. And we are for making sure that people are accountable, we're not just wasting money, we need to see results.

Scott Rechler:

Yeah. And I think it's going to be key to communicate that progress as these dollars are invested. Because I know like myself and a lot of my [inaudible 00:27:15], no problem paying more taxes. Really, the concern is it feels like it goes into a black hole, you think back to New York City, when Mayor de Blasio took over, imagine at the time someone said, "Mayor we believe in your vision here, we're going to give you, increase the budget from 68 billion to \$90 billion, we give you \$22 billion more to go execute that vision." And that's basically what happened. And we do have the pre K, which is great. But beyond that, we still have homelessness issues. We still have challenges of quality of life in our streets and our affordability of housing. And so I think result driven investing is going to be key and communicating that is going to be the key.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

I agree with you. I absolutely agree with you. And that's why we really had a vision for this budget, again, whether it was infrastructure, whether it's rebuilding small businesses, whether it's making sure we're investing in our education system, and our healthcare system. I think we... And again, trying to keep people in their homes, we have with the federal dollars as well and we added money into it just in abilities for people to keep roof over their head because that kind of instability just we know how difficult it is when you don't have a home. So, we are absolutely there with you, we want to make sure that we are actually doing the things that we set out to do. And I will be more than happy to be accountable and to make people accountable. We have no problem doing that. As I said from the Senate, we hold hearings, we drag people in, we do things. And every single one of my senators I will say as well, are just people who are consummate public servants.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

They are not there because they want to have a senator as a nameplate or because they want to make sure that they are perceived as great powerful people. No, everybody is there to try and figure out the best thing for all of New York. And I think that it's extraordinary, this budget, and it certainly is unprecedented, but it's in an unprecedented time. And I think the leadership quite frankly, is unprecedented as well.

Scott Rechler:

Yeah. It's historical, and I think it's more important than ever, because what's interesting is while we have cyclical recovery that looks like we're going to recover more quickly like this V shaped recovery. Really when you look below the surface, there's such a large part of our community that's not going to be participating. They were in part of this economic cycle, they've lost their jobs, had to close their business. And so they've been dislocated from this growth. And so it's really going to require a much more intentional set of policies by government to help them either get the training, get the loans, get the ability to get back in the workforce and a stable life going forward. So I do appreciate that.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

And I want to just make the point, and we did something for excluded workers as well. And I know that was kind of a big thing. But I live in a place and many of us do, where people who they're here, they're undocumented and they're here. And they have been very much part of the fabric of a lot of our communities, and have gotten no stimulus, no anything, and have been really hanging on by a thread. So we did put aside up to two billion dollars, so that the Department of Labor, in consultation with the Attorney General will be able to figure out a way where we can help people who have had absolutely nothing. And I kind of get it. I know it was controversial, but I do believe that we can't just ignore the plight of people and pretend that they're not existing. In addition to which so many of them were essential in our lives, making sure that our groceries got to stores. We know the reality.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

So you're right. There's just a lot of people who would not be engaged, they would be invisible to government if we just continued on the same track that we were on. And I can't pretend not to see those people. I live in a world where... But for visionary people who changed laws and marched and advocated, I would have been invisible, and I wouldn't remain invisible. So, I can't be part of that.

Scott Rechler:

And part of your job is to give a voice to the voiceless in this regard. Right?

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

That's right.

Scott Rechler:

Which I think is critical. What's interesting listening to you speak though, is that if you think about the caucus that you represent now, as the Senate majority leader, the district you represent in diversity of that district, it's a tough thing to balance even as you're talking about the funding for the people that are undocumented and some of the strain around that. And I'm speaking to some of your colleagues, I was asking them just in terms of how you do your job, and why you're so well respected? And the feedback

had been, that you operate with a great sense of integrity and character. And you're always open and willing to listen, but you can be tough when you need to be tough, but you're always fair. So, that's... I guess there's a good formula for your success by some of your colleagues, in terms of thinking about how you do this.

Scott Rechler:

And I think it's going to be critical because as the democrats have had the majority or super majority in the past, they really have been fleeting. So I think part of your job is going to be having to navigate some of those... The dicey pieces of policy to ensure that you can move the ball forward, but built under enough of a large enough tent, that you can sort of sustain the level of control and consensus.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

We're the most diverse Senate conference that has ever existed in that chamber, and not only geographically but demographically. That's what our majority constitutes so many different voices at the table, that we cannot afford not to be willing to listen to the different concerns and the different geographies and the different needs. So, that's what we did. And I think we were rewarded with now a super majority. Now we have 43. So we have a super majority. And we've expanded, I have every one of the biggest cities now represented in my conference. And I think it's because they see that we operate with integrity, that we are seriously trying to change the trajectory and really center it on the people that we're trying to serve. We understand the value of business, we understand that without a strong business and a strong economy, that we won't have places to work and so on. But we don't want to just consider ourselves people who are supporting businesses, we also have to support the people who are creating those businesses and creating those jobs.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

It is a balance, but I listen to every single one of these great members that I have. We form work groups, we try and figure out the hardest problems possible. I put all these different people together, and they have to listen to each other. And they have to respect each other. And then we come up with answers, and then once we're signed on, we're all on and we go.

Scott Rechler:

Yeah. I think as business leaders, I think we appreciate the importance of good government and working together and there's this ecosystem that's become more intertwined in a post-COVID world. And now we have to start thinking about what are the playbooks of the future, not the past? And one of the things that I think is going to be critical for our communities at large, is that government and business work more in sync in the joint mission of making our communities as a whole stronger. And then to all the points that we've discussed today in terms of equity and education, and making our communities more magnetic to attract people from around the world that want to be here and the public safety, these things need to be a partnership. And I think there's been periods in history where government and business in the private sector have worked well together and periods where they haven't. I think this is a period where we have no choice, but to be fully intertwined in working well together.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

We know that the partnership is really very, very important. And again, to you, I want to thank you for making sure that that conversation is always happening. You are extremely successful, and I know you are extremely influential, and the fact that you take the time to make sure that the dialogue is always

there that you weigh in and you ask for feedback, is something I think that's critical. And I do appreciate you and the model that you use to approach some of these very, very difficult situations. So, I certainly look forward to a continued, and really an expanding conversation with the business community, because I think we can all paint each other as demons are the bad people and the good people. And as you said, at this point, we are really at a crossroad.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

And how we decide we want to move will make the difference between whether we are successful, or whether we are just another failed us nation, society, and state. And I don't think any of us want to fail. We know how important this mission is. And by redoubling our efforts to work together, I think we will succeed in ways that will surprise the next generation and the next generation.

Scott Rechler:

One last question for you on speed on next generations. I think you have six grandchildren? Am I right about that? Six grandchildren.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

The last two were born just last month.

Scott Rechler:

Congratulations.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

[inaudible 00:37:57], I had twins in my family.

Scott Rechler:

Wow! Talk about a busy time, [crosstalk 00:38:02]. I'm happy for you. Congratulations.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

Thank you.

Scott Rechler:

But just with your grandchildren in mind, thinking forward, what would you want your legacy for what you did for New York, or the New York that they're going to grow up in and live in and their kids to be as you move forward?

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

Well, again, I think the New York is the greatest place in the world. So I would want them obviously, to stay and I would want them to be proud of the... Again, the hurdles that I removed from people's progress, that they were able to really achieve their highest aspirations and their ambitions by the work that they've done, not just on behalf of themselves, but on behalf of others. So I just want to leave a place where they can thrive and grow and see opportunities that again, have no impediments. Except what's up here, what they believe in.

Scott Rechler:

Right. Well, that's great. Well, listen, this has always been a city of opportunity and I think the steps that you're taking to remove impediments and anyone that works hard uses up here like you're using up here, which I greatly appreciate, it should really be able to thrive. And that's more important than ever in this post-COVID world. So, I appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts as we recalibrate reality for the future of New York. I appreciate all your leadership and you sharing your great story with us.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins:

Thank you so much. It's been really a pleasure. Thank you.

Scott Rechler:

Thank you so much Leader Stewart-Cousins. Be well and be safe. That concludes this week's episode of Recalibrate Reality. As you just heard, we need the best of government and we need the best of business working together to create a better and brighter future for all New Yorkers. If you'd like to hear more about our state's fiscal situation and more details about the budget, go to recalibratereality.com and watch my interview with Andrew Rein, the president of the Citizens Budget Commission. Thanks again to Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for joining me today. Thank you to the Regional Plan Association in the 92nd Street Y. And thank you to the team for making this week's episode possible. From 75 Rockefeller Plaza in New York, I'm Scott Rechler, see you next week.