



Westchester County Legislator
LYNDON D. WILLIAMS
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800 Michaelian Office Building
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
White Plains, New York 10601
(T) 914-995-2837; (F) 914-995-3884
Williams@westchesterlegislators.com

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Immigration Policies

The Trump administration policies and divisive rhetoric have denigrated, belittled and maligned immigrants of Latino and African heritage coming to the United States. Whether it's the call to "build a wall" to keep them out; or raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) rounding up families for deportation; or forcibly separating infants and young children from their parents at the US-Mexico border... these oppressive policies should be offensive to all Americans. The United States is a country of immigrants and Congress should pass sensible immigration laws to deal with illegal immigration instead of the Administrations' inhumane treatment targeting the powerless and holding young children in aged areas.

While the Westchester County legislature cannot pass immigration laws, we can make policy that ensure local law-enforcement officers and personnel are not used as tools for ICE in enforcing the oppressive



national policies. That is precisely what we have done in passing the Immigration Protection Act earlier this year. The law sets ground rules for how county officials share information about county residents with federal immigration authorities. With this law, everyone in the community, regardless of immigration status, can feel comfortable reaching out to county authorities, removing any trepidation immigrants have

about reaching out if they've been victims of crimes or if they know of crimes.

The law is NOT a "sanctuary" law and does NOT hamper federal investigations into violent crime. County law-enforcement officials must continue to cooperate with federal authorities in criminal investigations as well as in terrorism and other investigations to protect Westchester residents. ■

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Fall 2018 Newsletter

Lyndon D. Williams

District 13 ~ Mount Vernon

Opposing Citizenship Question on 2020 Census

I'm proud to say that a bipartisan group of legislators this session joined me in passing a resolution asking the Commerce Department to remove the proposed citizenship question from the 2020 Census questionnaire. This question has not been asked on the short form census questionnaire since the 1950s. A question of citizenship will discourage immigrants from responding to the census, leading to an undercount of the residents in Mount Vernon and other parts of Westchester County.

We need an accurate count. Census numbers are collected only once every ten years. The U.S. Constitution requires a count of all persons, not just citizens living in the United States. That count is used to determine federal funding and congressional representation. An undercount in Westchester could lead to a loss of congressional representation and result in Westchester taxpayers getting less federal funding for programs and infrastructure that benefit our residents. ■

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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Happy Holiday Season. It has been an eventful year at the Westchester County Board of Legislators. With a new majority and new leadership on the Board, and a new County Executive, we've begun moving forward with important work for the people of Westchester.

We banned gun shows on County-owned property. We passed the Immigration Protection law. We passed a law ensuring that all workers in Westchester County can earn sick time at work. We've passed funding for improvements to Willson's Woods Park. The County is taking control of the reconstruction of Memorial Field. We've approved hundreds of affordable housing units across Westchester. We have a new deal with Liberty Lines that will save the county millions while enhancing bus service, and we've begun purchasing new, more energy efficient buses. And we've approved new arrangements with the County's union members after many of them were asked to work for years without contracts.

As we turn to the budget process for next year, our eyes are on stabilizing County finances after years of mismanagement under the prior County Executive. Our financial situation wasn't created overnight and it won't be repaired overnight. But our decisions will always be guided by our values -- fairness, social justice, transparency and accountability; and our goal will always be to protect and enhance the County's roads, bridges and parks, and health, education, youth and other services that the people of Westchester can rely on.

Sincerely,
Lyndon D. Williams

Tel: (914) 995-2837 • Fax: (914) 995-3884 • E-mail: Williams@westchesterlegislators.com

Michaelian Office Bldg., 148 Martine Avenue, White Plains, N.Y. 10601 • www.westchesterlegislators.com • 914.995.2800 (main voice)

County will Take Over the Restoration of Memorial Field

For the first time in 10 years, Memorial Field has a real chance of being restored to its glory for the residents of Mount Vernon. This happened as the result of a letter I wrote in January this year to newly elected Westchester County Executive, George Latimer, requesting that the County take over the construction and renovations of Memorial Field. The newly restored facility will then be turned over to the City. The County Executive agreed. On Saturday, June 23, 2018, the County Executive and I held a town hall meeting with Mount Vernon community at Westchester Community College (Mount Vernon Campus) to discuss Memorial Field. Thank you for attending. I will host other forums.

A brief background. In 2009, as the newly elected county legislator, I championed the county's approval to spend \$9.7 million for restoring Memorial Field. Although the county provided most of the funding, the City government was responsible for managing the construction under an inter-municipal agreement (IMA) between the city and the county. The City was supposed to contribute \$3.0 million. The design of the new facility was completed and approved by all parties and a ground breaking occurred in 2011.

A series of events caused by the City brought the project to a halt. These events included the City's breaching the Agreement; by unilaterally changing of the plans without County approvals; its mis-



management of the project and failure to account for \$3.4 million of county funds. In addition, the city allowed tons of contaminated debris to be dumped on Memorial field. All of these events delayed the renovations for 10 years.

New York State Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow and I have worked closely to get this project moving. Both of us have brought millions of dollars in County and State funds to the City of Mount Vernon for Memorial Field, but the project was still stalled. With the County taking lead, Assemblyman Pretlow secured an additional \$5 million for the restoration of Memorial Field. This amount along with the remaining \$6.3 million of County

money now place the restoration of Memorial field on solid ground for completion. The Board of Legislators voted on Monday, November 19, 2018 for the County to move with the restoration of Memorial Field.

I will seek the cooperation of all the elected officials and will urge them to put differences aside in the interest of Mount Vernon residents and take advantage of this opportunity.

Next steps. The city must work with the New York State Department of Environment Conservation (DEC) on remediation of the contaminated debris from the field. The county will then begin the restoration of Memorial Field. ■

Improving our Transportation System

The county's Bee-Line bus service is the backbone of our transit system and a crucial life-line for Westchester residents. I'm happy to report that the county has negotiated a new contract with Liberty Lines, the private company that operates the system. Under the terms of the new deal, the county expects to save around \$20 million over the five-year life of the contract. The deal preserves this important resource and protects around 700 local jobs.

We also approved the replacement of all of the nearly 80 articulated Bee-Line buses, as well as many of our Para-Transit vehicles which service seniors and disabled individuals. These new vehicles also will be more fuel efficient. ■



County Funding for Memorial to Mount Vernon Police Officer Christopher Ridley

I'm pleased to report that the Legislature approved funding to construct a memorial in honor of Mount Vernon Detective Christopher Ridley and County Executive Latimer's Administration is moving forward with the project.

Christopher was off duty when he intervened to stop a serious altercation in front of the county's Department of Social Services at 85 Court Street in White Plains in January of 2008. He was fatally

shot when four county police officers responded to the incident, in which Christopher, who was in plain clothes, struggled to recover his gun from the person committing the assault.

Christopher Ridley was a hero. He could have ignored the incident and walked away but the person who was being brutally assaulted would have been murdered or seriously injured. Christopher Ridley cared.

I am working with the county and the Ridley family on a permanent memorial in front of the county building, where the incident occurred, which was renamed "Christopher Ridley Plaza".

The painful events of January 25, 2008 can never be healed for the



family and colleagues of Christopher Ridley, but we hope that this memorial reminds everyone who walks by that there are true heroes in this county and that this young man made the ultimate sacrifice to save a stranger who was in danger. ■

Banning Gun Shows at County Center and Other County-Owned Property

Gun violence is one of the most pressing issues of our time. I am proud to co-sponsor the first major piece of legislation this term permanently banning gun shows on the County Center and other County-owned property. The proliferation of guns in our communities have caused great pain and devastation for families who have lost loved ones to gun violence. This ban sends the message that the County's facilities will not be used for the peddling of dangerous weapons. As a local legislator, I call on the Congress to pass stronger national gun control laws to prevent the proliferation of assault weapons and dangerous firearms and ammunition.

We also passed a resolution supporting the New York state "red flag" law that allows a court to issue an order keeping guns out of the hands of people who have been shown to be dangerous to themselves or others. Similar laws are already on the books in Connecticut, Indiana, Washington and California. We need common-sense legal tools to protect Westchester residents from gun violence. ■

