

Chairman of the Board &
Westchester County Legislator
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Proudly Serving the 4th District



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Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Summer/Fall 2023 Newsletter



Chairman Vedat Gashi

Legislator, District 4 ~ Yorktown, New Castle, Somers



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The first half of 2023 has been one of challenges and changes at the Board of Legislators. I was honored to have been elected by my colleagues to serve as Board Chair in May, and to have their trust to move us through these turbulent times to refocus on doing the people's work. In spite of these challenges, we were able to pass a significant number of local laws, continue our commitment to new projects in Westchester, and help ease costs, while providing vital services to our constituents. As the first Albanian and first Muslim Chair in the Board's history, I feel a special responsibility as a role model to these communities in Westchester, and will do my utmost to make them proud and to pave the way for others to serve in leadership positions.

In partnership with our County Executive George Latimer and his staff, we will continue to dedicate ourselves to you, the constituents, and the residents of Westchester County. I am proud of the work that has resulted from the collaboration of our current Legislators, and look forward to fresh perspectives from the next cohort. Some of the safeguards we have implemented in the "back-to-school" season protect our children and our environment.

Under the **School Bus Stop-Arm Law**, the County is authorized to install monitoring systems on school buses to catch and ticket vehicles that fail to stop for a school bus's red visual signal and stop-arm. On September 2, our **"Upon Request" Single-Use Foodware Law** went into effect to reduce the consumption of plastics. By limiting the use of single-use foodware products to only when requested by the customer, we are not only promoting sustainability, we are lowering costs and waste for businesses since they will no longer have to provide items that are often discarded.



As always, I welcome hearing from the residents of Yorktown, Somers, and New Castle, as well as the entire County. Please continue reaching out to let me know how I can better serve you.

Sincerely,



Attorney General's Clinic Access Press Conference



Serve & Remember 9/11 Opportunities with Volunteer NY!



Breaking the Fast with Westchester Jewish Council



Business Council of Westchester Political Leadership Event



Opening of the WMC Women's Health Equity Center



Memorial Day Ceremony with Veterans

Enjoying Our New and Improved County Parks

From rolling hills to shore line parks, Westchester is fortunate to have a wide variety of beautiful outdoor spaces to enjoy. Creating new recreational opportunities and consistently maintaining and upgrading our Parks facilities is a top priority:

- **HILLTOP HANOVER FARM** is now under the stewardship of our County Parks, Recreation and Conservation department, which will ensure its ability to flourish and grow as a community asset.



- **MUSCOOT FARM** groundbreaking on July 20th kicked off its upcoming site work and unveiled the beautifully restored Main House.
- A **NEW PICKLEBALL COURT** has been installed at Tibbetts Brook Park so that Westchester residents can enjoy this latest sports trend. It's first come, first served, no reservations.
- The County's first full **CRICKET PITCH** is up and running at Croton Point Park and can be rented hourly or daily. Reservations and fees are required and available through the Parks permit office at 914-231-4575.



- Reopening of the **WESTCHESTER COUNTY CENTER** after serving as an overflow hospital, testing center and vaccination site during the pandemic. The County Center has returned to its regular operations – including **SECTION ONE BASKETBALL**.

PROTECTING OUR RIGHTS & FREEDOMS: *Promoting Transparency & Accountability*

Responding to issues raised by community leaders and advocates, the Board strives each year to implement innovative legislation in the areas of social and economic justice to benefit all Westchester residents:

- The **ASIAN-AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER (AAPI) NEEDS ASSESSMENT**, conducted in 2022 by the County's Asian-American Advisory Board and funded by the County, is the first study of its kind in Westchester's history. 800 Asian-American residents were surveyed. The findings, disclosed in May 2023, illustrate its value as a tool for collecting vital information to inform anti-discrimination policies for all groups within our County.
- The **ACCESS TO COUNSEL BILL** ensures legal representation to household tenants facing eviction and other covered proceedings when the household's annual income is at or below 300% of the federal poverty line, or 60% of the County's Area Median Income (AMI), whichever is higher. Approved unanimously, this new law levels the playing field and gives low-income households facing eviction access to free legal representation.
- The **TRUTHFUL DISCLOSURE BILL** establishes an effective mechanism for transparency and accountability in our elected County officials. They must complete a comprehensive Candidate Disclosure Form that captures essential biographical and financial information, as well as educational, military and employment histories. Candidates must certify the accuracy of the information provided.

ENSURING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF COUNTY RESIDENTS

Investing in programs to assist the most vulnerable in our community is how good government improves the lives of everyday people:

- **FREE THERAPEUTIC SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH** offered for the first time by the County Youth Bureau to those enrolled in the 63 *Invest in Kids* programs throughout the County.
- **INCREASED FUNDING FOR CHILDCARE** by lowering the parent contribution from 10% to 5% for subsidized programs, as well as **EXPANDED ASSISTANCE FOR FOOD INSECURITY PROGRAMS**
- **DIVERSE ABILITIES JOB FAIRS** for job seekers with disabilities to connect with potential employers, since people with disabilities suffer from among the highest rates of unemployment of any group in the County.
- **SUNFLOWER LANYARDS PROGRAM** at the County Airport to help those with hidden disabilities travel independently, knowing that they will receive the support that they may need at every stage of their journey -- in the terminal, boarding the plane, on the flight and finally arriving at their destination.
- **NARCAN TRAINING FOR COUNTY EMPLOYEES INITIATIVE** to kick off a public service campaign for County residents to better understand the opioid crisis and be better prepared to combat it.
- **ALLOCATING FUNDS TO REOPEN TWO COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH CLINICS** that had been defunded and closed during prior administrations to increase access for these vital services



GREEN ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INITIATIVES

The Board is committed to practical and progressive solutions to staving off climate change, increasing sustainability, and reducing the proliferation of toxic agents in our environment:

- **ADDITIONAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS** for both County and residential vehicles, increasing the inventory from 40 operating stations currently installed, to 189 stations by the end of 2023.
- The **LEAD FREE PARKS ACT** to prioritize the safety of our residents by monitoring and remediating drinking water in all County parks.
- The **RENEWABLE ENERGY DATABASE ACT** to empower municipalities by providing access to a database that assists in siting renewable energy infrastructure.
- The **EQUITY IN ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION ACT** to guarantee fairness in our decision-making processes by considering the historical cases of environmental justice.
- **HOLDING HOLTEC ACCOUNTABLE** to monitor the safe decommissioning of Indian Point and prevent incidents like radioactive water being dumped into the Hudson River from occurring.
- **"UPON REQUEST" LEGISLATION FOR SINGLE-USE PLASTIC FOODWARE** to lower waste in plastic usage by only including eating implements for take-out food orders when requested.



RELIEF FOR OUR HARD-WORKING TAXPAYERS

Ensuring that Westchester County is an affordable place to live for working families, seniors, veterans, and residents across the entire economic spectrum is vital to our growth as a county:



CUTTING COUNTY PROPERTY TAXES FOR THE FOURTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR



SUSPENDED BEE-LINE BUS FARES FOR TWO SUMMERS AND THE HOLIDAY SEASON



RESOLUTION PASSED OPPOSING CON EDISON'S PROPOSED DELIVERY RATE INCREASES

There are thousands of dollars in **UNCLAIMED FUNDS** currently being held by the NYS Comptroller's office.

Visit <https://ouf.osc.state.ny.us/> to verify if you have money waiting and, if so, file a claim!

