



Chairman of the Board  
& Legislator, District 5  
**BEN BOYKIN**  
*Addressing the Needs of District 5*



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## Voting Changes Coming to Westchester

In January, New York State passed a number of changes to voting laws that hopefully will help increase voter turnout and make it easier for voters to cast ballots.

At the Board of Legislators, I established a Voting Reform Working Group to examine these new laws, to explore the effects they will have on voters and candidates in Westchester, and to assess what if any adjustments will be necessary to local laws and rules to implement these changes.

Here are some of the important state changes that voters should know about:

- **One Primary Election Date** – Previously in New York we had separate dates for federal and state primaries. Under the new law there will be one primary election date – the fourth Tuesday in June, for all federal, state, county and local candidates. Separate rules apply to village elections that do not take place in November.
- **Early Voting** – Beginning with this November’s general election, voters in New York will have the option to vote early. In 2019, the dates for Early Voting will be Saturday, October 26th through (and including) Sunday, November 3rd. The Westchester County Board of Elections will select multiple voting locations specifically for Early Voting (which may not be regular polling places). The Westchester County Board of Elections will notify you by mail of your Early Voting polling place.
- **Voter Change of Address & Registration** – Voters will no longer have to re-register in person when they move from one location to another in New York State. When a voter moves within the state, and the Board of Elections receives notice of an address change from the U.S. Post Office, a state agency or an affidavit ballot, their voter registration will go with them.

In addition, beginning in 2020, 16 and 17-year-olds will be able to pre-register to vote, so they will be automatically registered and eligible to vote on their 18th birthdays.

The state legislature also is considering future bills that would allow for same-day voter registration and absentee voting by mail for any reason, but those laws have not been passed yet. ■

**Important  
VOTING DAYS  
TO REMEMBER**

- ✓ **Early Voting**  
October 26 – November 3
- ✓ **Election Day**  
November 5th

# Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

*Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years*

Fall 2019 Newsletter



## Chairman Ben Boykin

Legislator, District 5 ~ White Plains, Scarsdale, Harrison

### Safe Leave Law

I’m proud to say that this year I joined my colleagues in creating a new law to protect victims of domestic violence in Westchester.

Under the new law, which was signed by the County Executive on May 3, victims of domestic violence are entitled to take up to 40 hours of paid leave to attend or testify in court proceedings related to their situations, to move from an abuser’s residence or to confer with lawyers or other advisers.

This is a law that protects people when they are most vulnerable. No one who has been victimized this way should have to choose between their safety and their jobs, or should have to struggle to maintain their incomes at this difficult time.

We all hope that few people will ever have to take advantage of these protections, and we must continue to work to prevent this kind of violence. However, giving victims a margin of safety and security in their situations is just the right thing to do.

The Safe Leave Act creates protections beyond those that were created in 2018 by our Earned Sick Leave Law, which ensures access to sick time for workers. Under the Earned Sick Leave Law, workers who had no sick time before can earn up to 40 hours of sick leave per year if they are employed by a company with five or more workers. ■



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

This year has been a busy, productive time at the Westchester County Board of Legislators as we continue the work we started in January 2018 at the beginning of the current two-year legislative term. We have set in motion major improvements to our parks and infrastructure, have begun the process of repairing our finances after years of budget imbalances and we have passed important new protections for our environment and for working families of Westchester.

Our decisions are guided by our progressive values of fairness, transparency and inclusion, and our long-term goal of making Westchester a more vibrant, more sustainable and better place to work, live and enjoy.

These same values have guided the legislation we have already passed and the other initiatives we have undertaken this year, which include:

- Funding much needed public works and infrastructure projects including road work in White Plains and Harrison
- Approving substantial improvements to our parks across the county
- Safeguarding our environment by banning expanded polystyrene (EPS) takeout food containers along with other environmental protections
- Enacting the Safe Leave Law to protect victims of domestic violence
- Supporting legislation passed and signed into law for state criminal justice reforms
- Supporting state legislation passed and signed into law protecting renters
- Establishing a Voting Reform working group that issued a report on measures to implement new state election laws
- Enacting animal safeguards legislation
- Approving a new lease for the Family Court in New Rochelle

I am committed to finding ways we can better serve the people of the county. It was a privilege to be nominated by the New York State Association of Counties to be one of just 30 county leaders from across the nation – and the only one from New York State – to take part in the 16th Annual County Leadership Institute in Washington, D.C. this June. It was an outstanding opportunity to learn from experts and to work with other county leaders to develop strategies and explore best practices that can be applied to helping us accomplish our goals for the people of Westchester County.

It is an honor to serve as Chairman of the Board and to represent you, the residents of District 5, and to work for all the people of Westchester County. As always, I welcome your thoughts and comments about what the Board of Legislators can do to better serve you.

Sincerely,

*Ben Boykin*

## Safeguarding Our Environment



to eliminate the use and sale of expanded polystyrene (EPS) take-out food containers in Westchester.

Americans throw out billions of tons of EPS coffee cups and other food containers every year. This material clogs landfills, winds up in marine ecosystems, absorbs other pollutants and is difficult to recycle economically.

This new measure applies to take-out food containers – both those used by vendors and those that are sold to the public in stores. The measure also prohibits the sale of loose-fill EPS packing foam in Westchester. Prepackaged food that arrives sealed in EPS packages, packaging for raw egg, and butcher case packaging are exempted.

There are few things more important we can do as legislators than protecting and preserving Westchester’s environment for our health and safety and that of future generations. That’s why I’m proud to say that this May we passed legislation

This is common sense legislation that passed with bi-partisan support and with it, Westchester joins our neighbors in Nassau and Suffolk counties and New York City in working to leave our environment cleaner than we found it.

We also adopted energy benchmarking policy and procedures to allow the county to track energy use and efficiency in our buildings and help us apply for state energy efficiency grants. In addition, we have joined a lawsuit against the manufacturers and users of firefighting foam once used during training exercises at the County Airport. The foam has left behind pollutants, and we are seeking to recover the cost of cleanup and any other damages that the County may have or could incur. ■

## Enhancing Our Parks

We’re continuing our work to improve parks across the county – Sprain Ridge Pool in Yonkers finally opened in late July and families enjoyed relief in the summer heat. We’ve approved the renovation of the ball fields at Saxon Woods and Tibbets Brook Parks, passed plans to repair the Merestead site in Bedford and Mount Kisco, and OKed the repair of three dams at Blue Ridge Mountain Reservation in Peekskill and Cortlandt.

In the first six months of this year, we also approved renovations to two historic rides at Playland – the Grand Carousel and the Derby Racer – and repairs to the park’s Bathhouse. On July 30th, Playland opened its first entirely new ride



in more than 11 years, and I’m proud to report that the pace of attendance there is up compared to recent years.

Our public golf courses are among

are most utilized park facilities. Maple Moor recently underwent major renovations, and I had the opportunity to tour the course and observe first-hand the substantial work that still remains to be done. We will make sure that the appropriate renovations are completed to allow the course to be “up to par” and environmentally friendly.

The scope of work that has been approved and completed in the last 9 months illustrates our commitment to the county’s award-winning park system, which is so important to the quality of life in Westchester. Keeping Westchester’s parks jewels for the people of the county is one of our top priorities. ■

## Repairing Roads and Improving Infrastructure

We are continuing the crucial work of repairing and upgrading our physical infrastructure around the county, including accelerating long-stalled projects to repair our roads.

This year, we approved projects to repair Westchester Avenue and Orchard Street in White Plains, and Union Avenue in Harrison. In addition, we’ve approved repair work for Mamaroneck Avenue in White Plains, Harrison, and into Mamaroneck, as well as for portions of South Broadway in White Plains. These repairs are part of dozens of much-needed road projects we’ve approved across the county.

We also approved projects to rehabilitate the runway at Westchester County Airport and renovate our wastewater treatment plants, material recovery facility and transfer stations. ■



## Stabilizing the County’s Finances

Policy decisions made during the last County Executive’s administration left Westchester with a structural deficit and a fund balance that had been drained to half of what it had been just a few years prior. This year we took a major step to rebuild the county’s finances. We approved a one-percent increase in the county’s sales tax rate, by a unanimous, bi-partisan vote of 12-0.

The change will not impact the four large cities – Yonkers, White Plains, New Rochelle and Mount Vernon, which are currently at the new county sales tax rate of 8 ⅜% or higher.

This change will allow us to stabilize the county’s finances and begin rebuilding our fund balance while continuing to provide essential county services.

This measure will also help school

districts and local municipalities, which will share in the new revenue. That means millions in new revenue for schools and municipal governments in Scarsdale and Harrison that doesn’t come from property taxes.

For example, in 2019, the school district in Scarsdale will receive \$221,087, and the school district in Harrison will receive \$338,900. In 2020, that revenue will be \$479,467 and \$734,965, respectively. The municipalities will benefit similarly – Scarsdale will receive \$423,357 in 2019 and \$918,124 in 2020, and Harrison will receive \$677,530 in 2019 and \$1,469,341 in 2020.

We appreciate the support of the New York State Senate and Assembly in passing our legislation, and the Governor in signing this measure; and we thank County Executive George Latimer and his management team for their diligent work on this issue. ■



## PHOTO GALLERY



Ecumenical Emergency Food Pantry at the Thomas H. Slater Center



Agriculture Literacy Week at Mamaroneck Ave. Elementary School



Holocaust Remembrance



Valentines for Vets at Church Street School



St. Patrick’s Day with the seniors



Juneteenth