



Westchester County Legislator
MARGARET A. CUNZIO
Proudly Serving the 3rd District



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I would like to thank the constituents in District 3 for their support. I will continue to work hard in all our municipalities to keep Westchester moving forward.

Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Fall 2019 Newsletter



Margaret A. Cunzio

District 3 ~ Mount Pleasant, North Castle, Pleasantville and parts of Briarcliff Manor, Sleepy Hollow and Greenburgh



Legislation Passed Proposed by Legislator Cunzio to Protect and Help Animals in Need

Animal Abuse Registry Updated

Following the highly publicized case of abuse against a puppy in Yonkers last year, I was surprised to learn that since the BOL created the Animal Abusers Registry in 2012, only two names had been placed on the registry. As Chairwoman of the Public Safety Committee, I began an investigation into why the registry has not been used and a review of the judicial process that is supposed to submit names of abusers to the list.

Through these committee discussions with representatives of the Department of Public Safety, and the County Attorney's office we passed amendments to the 2012 law that will make the registry a far more comprehensive list of offenders. Under the previous version of the law, Judges could place offenders on the registry at their discretion. One of the changes that we made is that the District Attorney will now direct offenders to register and to sign a document acknowledging that they must provide personal information and a photo for the registry. That form will then be sent by the DA to County Police. The County Police will then share that information with local Police Departments.

The registry will also be publicly accessible on the County website. This will be especially helpful to local Veterinarians who may have suspicions about the cause of certain injuries to animals in their care.

My husband and I have opened our home to foster over 250 cats, kittens, dogs

and puppies waiting for adoption over the last 15 years. We have also rescued and transported 231 cats, 29, dogs, 9 rabbits and 1 guinea pig to "no kill" shelters in that time.



Dog Tethering Legislation

I am proud to share with you that the BOL passed a law I sponsored to protect dogs from unsafe and inhumane tethering practices. The new law- "Restricting the outdoor tethering of dogs", addresses a type of animal abuse that has until now been nearly impossible for animal welfare officers to effectively enforce.

The new law which amends The Laws of Westchester County by adding a new chapter 681 specifies tethering practices that can harm dogs physically or mentally. The new law also provides penalties for offenders that range from monetary fines of \$250-\$1000 and up to 15 days in jail for a first offense and a class "A" misdemeanor

charge for subsequent offenses which could carry a jail term of up to one year.

Some of the tethering practices that will be prohibited are tethering a dog in a way that; restricts access to food, water and dry ground; does not provide a dog with proper shelter for the dogs breed and the weather conditions; tethering a dog outdoors between the hours of 11:00pm-6AM; exposes the dog to noxious odors, garbage or taunting, provoking or hitting; during severe weather alerts; dogs that are sick, injured or nursing with puppies present; puppies under six months old.

This legislation helps codify proper care, treatment and maintenance of dogs and will be a tool for animal control and law enforcement officers, Chaining or tethering a dog and leaving him/her out in extreme weather with little or no shelter is an inhumane practice. I am proud to have worked on this legislation and I look at this as a starting point to examine other issues involving the care of animals. ■



District Photo Gallery



1. Speaking at the Kensico Dam during the 9/11 Ceremony reading the names of those who lost their lives on that tragic day.
2. Displaying the American flag that my cousin (who is a Major in the Air Force) flew over the US Embassy in my honor during the Valhalla American Legion Veteran's Day Celebration.
3. Marching in Armonk's "Frosty Parade" with my rescue dog Mindi Lou (with her Frosty hat on).
4. My husband and I visiting Santa at the opening ceremony for "Winter Wonderland" at the Kensico Dam.
5. It was an honor to present the Jacob Burns Center's staff with a certificate for the work they do in the community. As the county legislator representing Pleasantville and a member of the Arts Westchester Board- I am happy to support the arts.
6. Celebrating the Valhalla Fire Department's new truck at their "Wet Down" with Fire Commissioner Tony Ciancio.
7. At the Annual "Paws Crossed Rescue Day" in Elmsford with Greenburgh Supervisor Paul Feiner and the CEO/President Paws Crossed Rescue.
8. As chairwoman of the Public Safety Committee- I work with many commissioners including Commissioner Joe Spano (Corrections). I have coordinated tours of the jail and visited their community programs.
9. Honoring Matt Manfredi (Commissioner of the North White Plains Fire Department-North Castle) at the BOL Italian-American Heritage Month Celebration.
10. I had the opportunity to visit the Valhalla Ambulance Corp where a Valhalla Troop 1 Eagle Scout candidate was completing his Eagle Scout project.
11. Supporting our County Public Safety Officers and their canine companions at a BOL meeting where they were awarded certificates for their acts of heroism.
12. I was able to attend the BTH (Break the Hold) fundraising event in Pleasantville with the Halloran's, who founded this organization in honor of their son.
13. At the Tarrytown Troop 22 Eagle Scout ceremony- celebrating Sleepy Hollow's newest Eagle Scout.
14. Conducting a mock legislative session with the 5th graders from Wampus Elementary School (Byram Hills) - my alma mater!
15. Visiting a Byram Hills fellow graduate and constituent- Geri Mariano- as she visited Wampus Elementary School and spoke to the students about accepting differences.
16. Honoring the four newest Eagle Scouts for Hawthorne Troop 1 at their Eagle Scout ceremony.