



Westchester County Legislator
TERRY CLEMENTS
Proudly Serving the 11th District



800 Michaelian Office Building
 148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
 White Plains, New York 10601
 (T) 914-995-2826; (F) 914-995-3884
 Clements@westchesterlegislators.com

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Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Fall 2018 Newsletter



Terry Clements

District 11 ~ New Rochelle, Pelham, Pelham Manor

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As the newest county legislator, I would like to thank you for your support. It is an honor and privilege to represent the people of Pelham, Pelham Manor and New Rochelle at the Westchester County Board of Legislators. Some of the issues I am concerned with as your legislator are: school safety, preserving our environment, improving our aging infrastructure and protecting the rights of seniors and immigrants.

The Board's Committee on Intergovernmental Services, which I chair, works with federal, state and county governments and agencies to develop collaborative solutions to our common problems. One of our first endeavors is a brochure for parents and teachers entitled "School Safety." The publication is a guide to the resources available from the Westchester County Youth Bureau regarding anti-bullying strategies, defensive measures to combat violence in schools, crisis intervention training, and suicide prevention and awareness.

I have sponsored legislation to clean up county government – ensuring that signs on county buildings and in county parks and golf courses aren't used to promote the political fortunes of any elected officials, and ensuring that Westchester County public safety chaplains aren't appointed because of political patronage but because they're qualified individuals who live and tend to congregations in the community.

I am also excited to have been a part of important pieces of legislation this term including raising the age for the purchase of tobacco and related products from 18 to 21, ensuring that workers in Westchester have the opportunity to earn sick time, and giving people who have gotten into trouble with the law but are now on the right path a chance to make their case to prospective employers.

I would love to hear from you. With frequency communication we can resolve issues and make Westchester one of the best communities to reside in. With your help, we can move our county forward.

Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,



Stabilizing Our County's Finances

The most important task the Board faces in the coming months will be to begin to restore the county's financial health.

The county ended 2017 with a \$32.3 million deficit and at mid-year faced a 2018 deficit of around \$18 million. That's before any money is budgeted for a settlement with the county's largest union, which has worked without a contract for seven years.

This is not a situation that was created overnight.

The former county executive submitted budgets that he balanced with one-shot revenues and by borrowing to pay for short-term operating expenses.

Investments in roads, parks, and critical facilities were neglected. And the county's rainy day funds were drawn down to cover gaps.

It will take time to stabilize our finances and rebuild our fund balance, but with a new majority and new leadership on the Board -- and working with a new County Executive -- we will. ■

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.

The Board also approved the replacement of all of the nearly 80 articulated Bee-Line buses. The replacements will be diesel/electric hybrids with double the fuel efficiency of the older buses. That will save us money and be good for the environment.

We also approved the replacement of many of our Para-Transit vehicles which service seniors and the disabled. These new vehicles also will be more fuel efficient. ■

Holding Utilities Accountable

This year, violent storms ripped through the county, leaving thousands of residents without power, many for a week or more each time. The poor response by local utilities dramatically revealed flaws in the companies' communications with customers, coordination with local authorities and reliance on help from utilities across the country after storms hit. Now that climate change is bringing bigger, more frequent, and more violent storms, changes must be made.

At the Board of Legislators we've been working hard to hold the utilities accountable for their actions. We convened three separate meetings with representatives from the companies to examine the flaws in the system and the Board has urged the state's Public Service Commission to levy harsh fines against the utilities.

Business as usual is not adequate. Westchester County residents deserve better preparation, swifter response times and thorough, accurate communication. ■



Earned Sick Leave



Coming to work sick means decreased productivity, a likelihood that illnesses will spread and increased stress from work-family conflict.

At the Board of Legislators we've advanced legislation to ensure access to sick time for workers in Westchester.

Before now, more than two thirds of people working at businesses in the county lacked access to sick time without penalty.

Under our measure, workers who have no sick time can earn up to 40 hours of sick leave per year, while workers who already have more generous benefits will have their benefits unaffected. ■

Protecting Our Children's Health

TOBACCO 21
For a healthier WESTCHESTER COUNTY, we're changing the tobacco purchasing age.
~~eighteen~~ **21**



Protecting the health and welfare of residents is one of county government's most important jobs, and we took a big step this June, raising the age for the sale of tobacco and related products from 18 to 21.

This bipartisan measure, which passed with a vote of 16-1, applies to tobacco and to vaping products for sale in Westchester. That's important. In considering the new law, we heard moving testimony

from many young people about the explosive growth in use among high schoolers and even middle schoolers of high-nicotine vaping products.

Raising the age not only protects 18 and 19 year-olds, but also protects middle schoolers who know 18 and 19 year-olds, since those older children will no longer be able to buy vaping or tobacco products for their younger friends and acquaintances. ■

Protecting Public Integrity

In response to revelations in 2017 that two Department of Public Safety chaplains were neither clergy members nor Westchester residents, I sponsored a law, passed by a unanimous vote, requiring that Westchester County police and public safety chaplains be active members of the clergy either residing in or presiding over congregations in Westchester.

I also sponsored legislation prohibiting the use of county property for political promotion by banning the use of the name or the likeness of a sitting county executive on promotional and informational signs on county property or property leased by the county.

County government should be by and for the people, not by and for politicians and their cronies. ■

New Rochelle Family Court

A plan to re-locate the New Rochelle Family Court from its current home on North Avenue to a site on Pelham Road has become a cause of community concern.

As a former resident of Pelham Road, I share that concern.

The proposed new location is the site of the former A&P supermarket.

Filling an empty commercial space is a laudable goal, but I worry about congestion in the area, particularly with the Isaac E. Young Middle School and the Trinity Elementary School nearby. Also in the area are senior facilities like United Hebrew and Willow Towers, and the College of New Rochelle just a few blocks away.

I'm also concerned that the location would make the court less accessible. Although the lease is up at the North Avenue site, and the court will have to move, a site more like the current one -- centrally lo-

cated, with easy access to nearby bus and train lines -- would make appearing before the court less of a hardship for community residents.

For those who don't know, Family Court handles matters such as adoption, child custody, guardianship and paternity, as well as cases of child abuse and neglect and cases of domestic violence. It is not a criminal court. It is a court that does important work to protect vulnerable children and families, and having local courthouses is a major help to families who might otherwise have to travel great distances to make court appearances.

We have three Family courthouses in Westchester -- one in Yonkers, one in White Plains, and one in New Rochelle, each handling caseloads from different areas.

I want to see the Family Court remain in New Rochelle to serve our community,

but at a more suitable location than the one under consideration. ■



PHOTO GALLERY



Terry at the Guidance Center of Westchester's Youth Employment Dinner



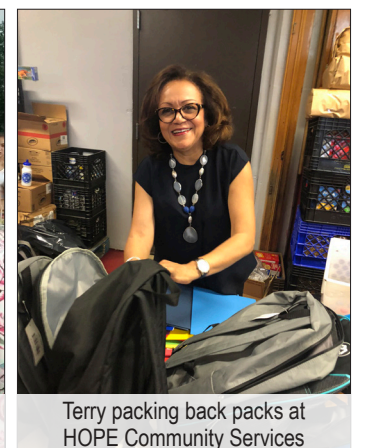
Terry at Rye Playland Park for Westchester County Foster & Adoption Family Fun Day



Terry serving lunch at HOPE Community Services



Terry with NRPD Officers at the NRPD's Annual National Night Out



Terry packing back packs at HOPE Community Services