



Westchester County Legislator
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Proudly Serving the 12th District



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Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Winter 2023/24 Newsletter



David Imamura

District 12 ~ Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Edgemont, Greenburgh,
 Hartsdale, Hastings-on-Hudson, Irvington
Chair, Environment, Energy & Climate

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

My first year as a Westchester County Legislator is about to come to a close, and what a year it's been. In addition to all the significant legislation we passed as a body, as Chair of the Environment, Energy and Climate Committee, I couldn't be more pleased that the first set of bills that went through were four environmental safeguards detailed below that will protect our children and vulnerable communities for generations to come.

I am equally proud of some other important initiatives I've been able to get off the ground to benefit District 12 and beyond. As a way of giving back to our hard-working constituents, my office spearheaded an intergovernmental effort to return the millions of dollars of unclaimed funds that sit in banks and accounts throughout New York State. It began with a letter writing campaign to alert individuals with money in their names on how to retrieve the funds, and culminated with a well-attended workshop at the Hastings-On-Hudson Library on December 2. Joining me were NYS Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, NYS Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, Assemblymember MaryJane Shimsky, and the helpful staff from the NYS Comptroller's office who assisted residents in person with claiming their funds.

As one of three Legislators in Westchester to host asylum seekers in our District, I have been so heartened by the generosity and welcoming spirit shown by our neighbors towards those who have been displaced with little or no resources. We have witnessed and supported an outpouring of donated food, clothing and other necessary items – an effort coordinated by Ardsley Mayor Nancy Kaboolian, whose village is their temporary home.

Finally, as the first Asian-American Legislator in Westchester County's history, it is important to me to be responsive to the needs of the AAPI community. As such, I am pushing for more AAPI curriculum to be taught in County public schools and incorporation of Diwali and Eid as holidays into school calendars as a way of creating a better understanding of the role of AAPI residents in our country's history. Following a recent press conference on the matter, my office will be sending out a letter co-signed by a range of local AAPI advocates to school district boards and administrators in the hopes of persuading them to make this a reality. This in turn will help diminish the community's documented feelings of isolation, as well as hopefully reduce the rise of hate incidents they have experienced.

I look forward to finding more innovative ways to make life for all in District 12 the best it can be. I wish you all a healthy and happy holiday season, with hopes for a more peaceful year around the world in 2024.

Sincerely,



Swearing In as County Legislator



Calling for AAPI Curriculum in Westchester County Public Schools

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:

- **COUNTY PROPERTY TAXES CUT** for the fourth consecutive year
- **SUSPENDED BEE-LINE BUS FARES** for two summers and the holiday season
- **COMMITMENT TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING** by allocating \$90 million so far in 2023 towards affordable housing projects
- **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!



SUBSCRIBE TO MY MAILING LIST!

From public health alerts to information about upcoming events in your community to breaking news on legislation that affects you — **SIGN UP NOW !**

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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:

- 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.
- **WILLSON'S WOODS POOL COMPLEX** is back open this summer after extensive repairs and improvements were made last year, just in time to provide cool relief from this summer's scorching heat to wave-seekers, sun-seekers and swimmers of all ages.
- A **NEW PICKLE BALL 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.
- Important upgrades have been made to the **SOUTH COUNTY TRAILWAY** for a smooth, safe ride for bikers, hikers and roller bladers, as well as improvements in landscape maintenance and the re-installment of the beloved birdhouses!
- Restoration planning for the **KINGSLAND POINT LIGHTHOUSE**
- 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**

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. As the result of our lobbying, the Governor signed the "Save the Hudson" legislation, aimed at protecting the economic vitality of the Hudson River Region, into law in August.
- **"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.



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 **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 **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 Westchester 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 **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.

AROUND THE DISTRICT



1. Honoring Irvington Girls Soccer Champs 2. Honoring Anjali Chen for AAPI Heritage Month 3. Signing of Environmental Laws Package at Saxon Woods 4. Reading Buddies Program at Yonkers Waterfront Library 5. Addressing attendees at the Greenburgh Veterans lunch 6. Unclaimed Funds Workshop in Hastings-on-Hudson

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.
- **AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR OUR SENIOR LGBTQ+ RESIDENTS** in the works at a new apartment complex, Court Street Residences, on the southwest corner of Court and Quarropas Streets in White Plains. The plan consists of at least 140 residential units for applicants aged 55 and older. The facility will be all-electric and incorporate green technology, making it environmentally friendly and sustainable, as well as provide social programming for LGBTQ+ seniors from The Loft.
- 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.

