



## Westchester County Board of Legislators

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148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor  
White Plains, New York 10601



News from  
**ALFREDA A. WILLIAMS,**  
your County Legislator...

## Significant Recent Pieces of Legislation Passed by the Board

### Westchester County Legislature Passes Bill to Limit Terms

In January 2011, The Westchester County Board of Legislators passed a bill that would limit the terms for two county offices. The legislators' proposal would impose a twelve-year consecutive limit for the seventeen legislators and the county executive. The bill, approved by a vote of 10 to 6, would limit the terms of county legislators to six two-year terms in office, while the county executive would be limited to three four-year terms. The legislation will take effect January 1, 2012.

### Examining County Government

To fully determine how County government can be made more efficient and tax payer friendly, we must not only scrutinize spending, but examine the form and structure of county government. I supported the formation of a Citizens' Charter Revision Commission to undertake a total review of county government. The last time the County Charter was examined in 1988; over twenty years ago, the County Charter sets forth, among other

**Storm Water Management Control Law** - the legislation provides a mechanism for the County to work with local governments to plan and fund projects to alleviate regional flooding. The new program includes development of a watershed-based storm water management plan, the implementation of a county program to match funds for municipal storm water projects, and the creation of watershed advisory boards. This was the product of a cooperative effort between the County Executive's office and the Board of Legislators, led by the Legislation Committee

Currently, I along with County Legislator Mary Jane Shimsky are in the process of forming a Saw Mill River Watershed Advisory Board to work on projects and obtain funds for flooding problems affecting the Town of Greenburgh, especially the Village of Elmsford.

things, the form and structure of County Government and the roles of the Executive and Legislative branches as well as the various county departments. This Commission should examine such fundamental issues as: Do we need seventeen county legislators? Do we need a County Executive? There are contradictions in the Charter that need to be resolved. The citizen's commission will have one year to perform its task.

# Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

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

Summer 2011 Newsletter



## Alfreda A. Williams

District 8 ~ Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown, Elmsford, Greenburgh, White Plains

### Committee Assignments

Budget and Appropriations

Community Services, Chair

Generational, Cultural & Ethnic Diversity

Government Reform, Efficiency & Savings

Housing, Planning & Operations

Legislation

Public Works, Parks, Labor & Transportation

July 2011

Dear Constituent/Neighbor:

It is my privilege and pleasure to be working as your County Legislator. I am pleased to represent Westchester's Legislative District #8, which encompasses Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown, Elmsford, Greenburgh and White Plains.

2010-2011 have been busy and productive times here at the Board of Legislators. I am working hard to ensure that the state of our county is stable and secure. As you all know, we are certainly living through challenging economic times and Westchester County government is the safety net for the County's neediest residents.

I look forward to working with you in the future. Let me know your concerns and suggestions. Feel free to contact me at any time. My direct dial is (914) 995-2833 and my e-mail address is [AWilliams@westchesterlegislators.com](mailto:AWilliams@westchesterlegislators.com) or by mail: Legislator Alfreda Williams, c/o Westchester County Board of Legislators, 148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor, White Plains, NY 10601.

Thank you for your attention,

Sincerely,

Alfreda

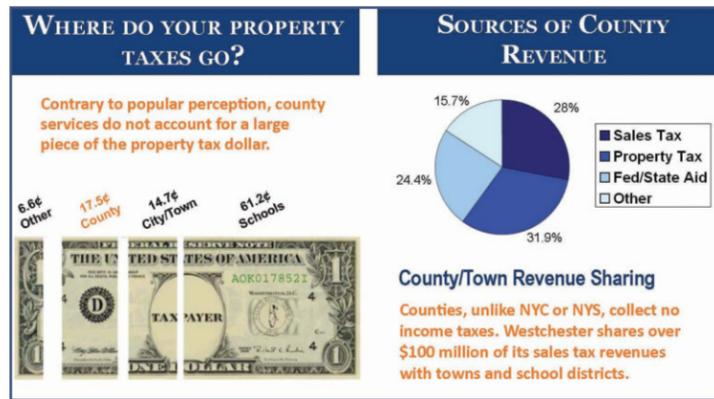
## BUDGET & APPROPRIATION

### Update on the County Budget

The 2011 Westchester County Budget resulted in a decrease in the tax levy of 2.2% the second largest decrease in the tax levy in 36 years.

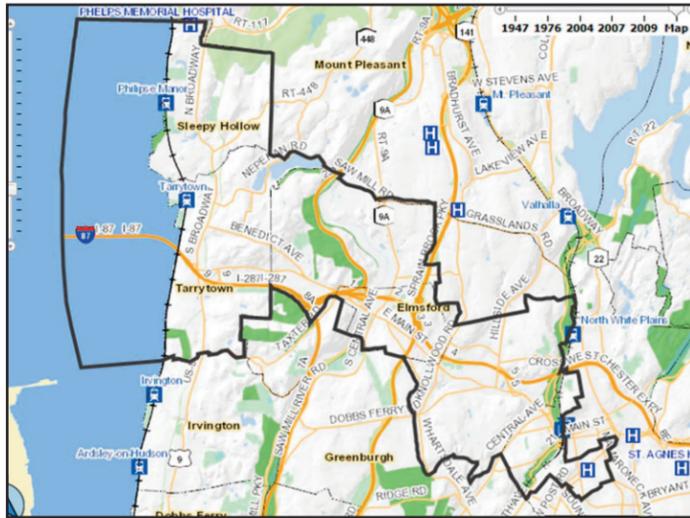
This 2.2% decrease in the tax levy was achieved while maintaining the majority of the county's all important safety-net programs which the County Executive tried to reduce or eliminate. These programs maintain child care services, youth programs, neighborhood health clinics, legal services for the elderly and victims of abuse, and the Human Rights Commission which safeguards anti-discrimination programs and practices in employment and housing.

In addition, through retirement incentives, the county workforce was reduced by over 400 employees or 10%. While the budget



process did involve some controversy, the result was a good one. Sales tax, coming in at the projected amount, is important not only for the County's budget but for Towns, Villages and School Districts as well because the County shares its sales tax revenues with these municipalities and school districts.

## The 2010 U. S. Census – Impacts on Westchester County



As you are aware, federal law requires that a census count be taken in every state every ten years. Once the totals are tallied, state and counties are then required the following year to re-draw their election districts to fairly accommodate changes in population. New York State is responsible for re-drawing its own districts as well as those for their U.S. Congressional district.

This task for dividing Westchester County falls to the Board of Legislators, and we are required to adopt new districts by the middle of May. The requirement is that the population be divided between the 17 county legislators with no more than a 5% difference between population counts per district. While the changes are not huge, see how Westchester's demographics have shifted in the past ten years:

- Westchester's total population grew by 3%; from 923, 459 people to 949,113 people ... an all time high.
- The biggest growth was in the northern part of the county, with the southern part of the county actually losing population.
- The Hispanic/Latino population grew by 21.8% in the county, reflecting the largest demographic growth, with Port Chester now 59.4% Hispanic/Latino and Sleepy Hollow now 51.5% Hispanic/Latino.

District #8 underwent minor changes with only a part of Sleepy Hollow remaining in the district and an expansion of the district in the town of Greenburgh and the City of White Plains. I look forward to getting to know these new neighborhoods and listening to their issues and concerns.

## Community Services Committee 2011

The Community Services Committee has been incredibly busy this year. We have kept a close eye on the closures of the County Mental Health Clinics. We met with the Department Commissioner three times; representatives from the State Office of Mental Health; and the not-for profits who are transitioning the County patients to their agencies.

As Chairwoman, I went with my Committee staff to visit all of

the closing clinics and discuss the conditions with the employees. I expressed my concerns for the well being of the patients and treatment of the County employees with the Commissioner, and made sure that the Board of Legislators was aware of all documentation with the State, and that every patient had been seen by a new clinician before the county clinic closed. We will continue to monitor this process throughout the year and follow up with how the new agencies are handling their new caseloads.

## Westchester County Lawmakers Call for Stricter Child Care Regulations, Funding Restored to Responsible Levels

In the wake of last month's tragic death of 5-month-old Monica Isabel Yunga while in unregulated child care in Ossining, Westchester County lawmakers joined with childcare advocates and parents renewing their call for safe and affordable child care options for Westchester families. Legislators renewed their call to restore child care funding to responsible levels, given that drastic budget cuts to the childcare programs at the county, state and federal level have threatened to leave hundreds of area children without daycare subsidies and placing many children at risk.

The safest and best child care option for parents is a regulated child care environment, but regulated child care is expensive. Most working parents need financial assistance to afford regulated care. More Child Care funding is needed from Washington or New York State. Last year, Westchester County Executive Robert Astorino cut \$1.5 million in child care spending, by eliminating the Westchester County Child Care Scholarship Program, implementing a freeze on new Title XX child care subsidies and increasing parent contributions from families from 15% to 20%. He proposed bigger child care cuts in his 2011 budget. Fortunately, these funds were restored by the Board of Legislators with the exception of the Scholarship Program. The parent contribution will return to 15% shortly, but Title XX remains closed to new applicants and the Scholarship Program, which assisted over 230 families annually, is gone.

Westchester County families need a properly funded and fully-regulated child care system. In order to ensure that no other family is faced with this tragedy.

The Committee has also conducted oversight meetings on the Child Protective Services program and programs for homeless children and families. The Committee is working diligently on a proposed cyber-bullying bill to provide more education to students and families about what cyber-bullying is and support for victims of cyber-bullying.

The Westchester County Board of Legislators (BOL) and the Board's Committee on Community Services honored a number of extraordinary leaders from the



First Annual Child Care Award Recipients, May 23, 2011

childcare community during a special ceremony in May, at the Westchester County Board of Legislators Chambers in White Plains. The Board and the Committee on Community Services presented the group of program directors from throughout the county with proclamations for their "excellence and incredible commitment in ensuring quality childcare is provided to children."

## Restoration of the Tarrytown Lighthouse

I am pleased to announce that in May the Board of Legislators approved funding for the restoration of the Tarrytown Lighthouse located in Kingsland Point Park in the Village of Sleepy Hollow.

The funding provides for a share of County bonds in the amount of \$552,000 and grant funds of \$248,000 to be received from the Village.

The work will consist of repairs and repainting of the exterior and interior of the building, as well as the replacement of the globe.

Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation acquired the Tarrytown Lighthouse in 1974, in recognition of its historical value. This structure was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. The Lighthouse offers school children and students of all ages the opportunity to visit during a tour and experience firsthand what life must have been like on the turn of the century Hudson River.

Note that in accordance with federal guidelines for job creation, a job is created for every Thirty Thousand (\$30,000) Dollars spent on a construction project. Therefore, this project will generate approximately 27 jobs in the construction industry.

