



Westchester County Legislator
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Proudly Serving the 16th District



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As we gear up for the 2019 budget, the Board of Legislators will face some very difficult decisions. The County ended 2017 with a \$32.3 million deficit. This is not a situation that was created overnight and will certainly take a great amount of hard work to get through. People ask, "How did we get here?" In order to prop up a "no tax increase" pledge, for six years, the former County Executive submitted budgets that were balanced with one-shot revenues and by borrowing to pay for short-term operating expenses. Departments necessary for efficient delivery of County services were drained of the talented people we needed to provide public safety, sanitation, healthcare and other services. Investments in critical facilities were neglected, and the County's rainy day funds were drawn down to cover gaps. The Board of Legislators has been working closely with our new County Executive, George Latimer, to move our County's finances in a healthy direction. Our mission for 2019 and beyond, will be to stabilize and improve the county's fiscal condition while holding fast to our values and maintaining the quality of life for residents.



Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Fall 2018 Newsletter

Christopher A. Johnson

District 16 ~ Yonkers

HITTING THE GROUND RUNNING

Before taking my seat on the Board of Legislators, I was able to influence my soon to be colleagues to include two important items in the 2018 Westchester County Budget. The first was funding for a Countywide Coordinator for My Brothers Keeper (MBK), an initiative launched by former President Barack Obama. To my friends who enjoy all that nature has to offer, we were also able to secure a full time Curator for Lenoir Preserve. This summer I had the pleasure of meeting with our new Curator and touring the beautiful grounds.

Joining the board, I am excited to be part of a historic era in Westchester County. The legislature today is the most diverse in County history, with the highest number of people of color and with women currently holding a majority.



It is my pleasure to serve as Chairman of the Appointments Committee for the Board of Legislators and in the past nine months we have appointed dozens of extraordinary people to a number of important boards including the Human Rights Commission, Women's Advisory Board, Rent Guidelines Board and more.

WESTCHESTER COUNTY

Christopher A. Johnson
 Legislator, 16th District
 Chair, Committee of Appointments

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Committee Assignments
 Labor & Housing
 Public Safety

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Thank you for your constant and continued support as your County Legislator. It has been a pleasure serving you in this new role. As many of you know, I had the honor of serving Yonkers as a Councilperson, representing the 1st district for six years. In that time I developed an understanding of what it would take to move Yonkers forward. Issues surrounding fair and affordable housing, public transportation improvements and our criminal justice system are vital to our city's growth, and as your Legislator, I have been working hard to improve your quality of life. My colleagues and I have had the opportunity to introduce and pass several pieces of critical legislation in a number of areas. I have also had the pleasure of meeting new people and seeing old friends at different events all around the County. As we head into the final stretch of 2018, I want to make sure you are aware of the work that is being done on your behalf. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office.

All the best,

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LEGISLATION

It is critically important that Yonkers has a voice in all of the legislation we pass at the Board of Legislators. From banning Gun Shows to Banning the Box. Take a look at what we have done so far, and what's to come.

IMMIGRATION PROTECTION ACT



Immigrants have always and will continue to be a vital part of the fabric of our country. This legislation -- which gives guidance to County employees about the appropriate information to share about Westchester residents to the federal government -- protects not only immigrants living peacefully in our community, but all Westchester residents regardless of immigration status. The Immigration Protection Act is fully compliant with all state and federal laws, and it does not impede County law enforcement organizations from cooperating in criminal investigations.

EQUAL PAY

According to the Pew Research Center, for every \$1 a White man makes – a white woman makes \$0.82, a Black man makes \$0.73, a Black woman \$0.65, a Hispanic man \$0.69, and a Hispanic woman \$0.59. I was proud to support the Wage History Anti-Discrimination Law, aimed to prevent the perpetuation of the gender wage gap. This new Local Law will make it illegal for employers to request wage history of a prospective employee in Westchester County. Equal work deserves equal pay!

BAN THE BOX

The Fair Chance to Work Act, also known as “Ban The Box” would eliminate the question about an applicant’s past convictions on a job application in Westchester County. I sponsored this bill to give prospective employees who may have a record of conviction, but who are otherwise qualified for a

job, a chance to explain their circumstances without being immediately excluded from an opportunity. There is a disproportionate number of people of color who are punished by the criminal justice system, which adversely affects their chances of finding gainful employment. A potential employee should not be disqualified because of a mistake made 20 years ago, or because they checked a box on an application.

EARNED PAID SICK LEAVE



We have had one of the worst flu seasons this year. That's why my support of Earned Paid Sick Leave was so important for the people of Westchester County. 123,000 workers in Westchester County do not get paid sick time. Many of whom earn low wages, have to choose between their health and receiving a paycheck. The ability for some workers to efficiently do their jobs is compromised, when a person is forced to make a choice between their wellbeing and rent. That is unfair and inhumane!

VETERANS BILL

I supported a bill to encourage the hiring of service-disabled Veterans in all county contracts. With approximately 40,000 veterans in Westchester, it is important that we are dedicated to helping service disabled veterans succeed in business and get a fair shot at county contracts.

GUN SHOW BAN

One of the first pieces of legislation my colleagues and I had the opportunity to pass, is the Gun Show Ban, which would prohibit Gun Shows from being held on any County

property. While we do recognize that there are many responsible gun license holders that follow the laws surrounding the use of guns, it is difficult to ignore the one too many persons who abuse the 2nd amendment, and cause undue harm to our children, our schools, our community, and our Country.

FAIRNESS IN HOME OWNERSHIP

Fair and equitable housing is a clear problem in the city of Yonkers and Westchester at large. Without wasting any time, I along with Legislator Catherine Borgia (D-9), introduced legislation to ensure we are one step closer to fair and transparent housing practices. The Fairness in Cooperative Home Ownership Bill, is designed to prevent discrimination in the co-op buying process. My office has recorded a number of different sides on this issue and I appreciate the ability to have conversations about what is needed. In doing so, we ended up with legislation that is taking a step in the right direction.

WAGE THEFT



Often referred to as Wage Theft Legislation, amending the Westchester County law for licensing home contractors, which I co-sponsored with Legislator Nancy Barr (D-6), would regulate home improvement licensing to protect workers from underpayment and non-payment of wages. The proposed changes in the law will establish a process for filing complaints, creating new levels of protections for employees. Everyone should have a chance be paid a fair wage for the work provided.

VIEWS FROM THE 16TH (DISTRICT)

I pride myself on being in the community and enjoying all that our city has to offer. From starting the year off with The Annual Black History Concert to ending the summer by hosting an in depth Coffee and Conversation with County Executive George Latimer at the Yonkers Public Library, my commitment to you is one that I take seriously.

MARVEL'S BLACK PANTHER

For Black History month I partnered with Justin Tolbert, President of Yonkers Community Action Program to send over 200 Yonkers students to see the latest Marvel film, Black Panther, which depicts the first black super-hero. In a time where racial tensions have increased and our boys and girls are questioning their identities, I felt compelled to expose our youth to a film such as this, where they can see themselves as powerful and heroic.



STREET RENAMING IN YONKERS

Fifty years ago Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. Although his life was taken, his legacy remains. On April 4th, it was an honor to be a part of the re-dedication of the street re-naming of Warburton Avenue in Yonkers to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Later that week I hosted my annual Black History Concert and churches from across the city, celebrated him in song and praise.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Throughout this summer I had the pleasure of touring some of our County Parks, attending some fun events in different Yonkers communities and hosting a Coffee and Conversation with County Executive George Latimer, where residents were able to ask questions on some of the most pressing county issues.



MORE NEWS

This year the Board approved the replacement of all of the nearly 80 articulated Bee-Line buses that serve county riders. This summer, I had the opportunity to ride some of the routes and get a good look at the ins and outs of our public transportation system. I am in the midst of conducting a survey, which will allow me to advocate for some much needed adjustments that will make your commute a smoother one.



If you're like me, you were probably upset about Sprain Ridge Pool having to be closed this summer for repairs. However, after a visit to Sprain Ridge, I understand why it had to be closed. The repair work done under the previous administration was rushed and therefore done poorly causing a number of public safety issues. Now, we are doing all of the work properly so the next time Sprain Ridge opens up, it can remain open throughout the summer and for years to come.



The National Black Caucus of the Young Elected Officials Network drafted a letter to the President, urging the Trump Administration and elected officials around the country to stand up against police violence and state supported violence against black people. I personally forwarded the letter to local, county and New York State Officials, urging them to show their support in the commitment to push for transformational change within our police departments, our communities, and throughout our country.