



Westchester County Legislator  
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*Proudly Serving the 8th District*



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# Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Fall 2018 Newsletter



## Alfreda A. Williams

District 8 ~ Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown,  
Elmsford, Greenburgh

## Affordable Senior Housing Projects Moving Forward

Affordable housing, especially for Westchester's seniors, is one of the county's critical needs. That's why I am proud to say that after years of discussion between the County, the Town of Greenburgh, and the Valhalla School District, a project to build 74 units of affordable housing for seniors in Greenburgh is finally moving forward. The site is the former Westhelp housing, adjacent to the Westchester Community College campus.

Under a deal negotiated by the County Executive the town, the Mayfair complex will include 60 one-bedroom apartments, eight two-bedrooms, and six studios.

The project also will be good for taxpayers with the developer paying the county \$900 to \$1.5 million to County and paying Greenburgh \$600,000.

This year the board also unanimously approved the county's acquisition of land for the Mount Hope Plaza project in White Plains. That project, at 65 Lake



Street, will offer one and two-bedroom apartments to seniors whose household incomes are no more than 50% or 60% of the area median income.

The approval represents years of co-operation between the County, the City of White Plains and Mt. Hope AME Zion Church – which currently owns the

site, and shows what can be accomplished when a responsive government works closely and cooperatively with community organizations and leaders.

These are the sorts of projects we need more of in Westchester County so our seniors can remain in their communities. ■

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As always it is my honor and privilege to serve as your legislator in Westchester County's 8th Legislative District, which includes a part of Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown, Elmsford, Greenburgh and a part of White Plains.

In January, 2018 I was elected to the leadership position of Vice Chair by my colleagues in the Democratic majority on the Board of Legislators. The responsibility of the Vice Chair is to assist in initiating and guiding legislation through the various committees for an ultimate vote by the Board of Legislators. I am also delighted to announce that as of April, 2018 we are the only County legislature in New York State with a majority of women legislators (see photo) out of a total of seventeen legislators, nine are women.

In addition to my leadership role, I serve on the following committees: Budget and Appropriations, Labor and Housing, Legislation, Rules, Social Services, and Seniors and Constituencies. These committee memberships allow me to continue to work for responsible financial choices that maintain necessary social services and essential programs while also working with local municipalities to reduce costs via collaboration and consolidation.

Please share your concerns or ideas by contacting me using any of the methods listed on the cover page.

Sincerely,

## Stabilizing the County Budget

The Board of Legislators will face some very difficult and consequential decisions this fall as we consider the county's 2019 budget.

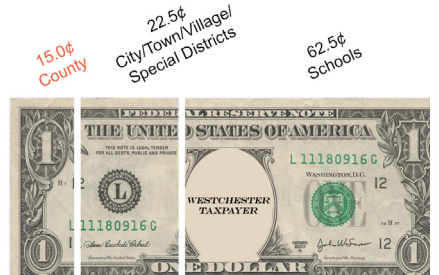
The county ended 2017 with a \$32.3 million deficit and at mid-year faced a projected 2018 deficit of around \$18 million. Those numbers don't take into account a settlement – hopefully coming this fall -- with the county's largest union, CSEA, whose 3,000 members have worked without a contract for seven 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.

I and many of my colleagues voted against those budgets and repeatedly warned of the looming problems they left unsolved.

With a new majority and new leadership on the Board -- and working with a new County Executive – we will be working to stabilize and improve the county's fiscal condition while holding fast to our values and improving the quality of life for residents. ■



For the first time in its history, the Board of Legislators is a female-majority body



Protecting Our Veterans

There are few things more important than assisting those who have served us.

That is why we passed a law encouraging the use of New York State-certified, service-disabled veteran-owned businesses in county contracts.

The law will provide opportunities for veterans building a life and business for themselves after their service, and hopefully encourage them to get state certification, which can make them eligible for state work.

I'm also happy to see the County finally pushing forward with plans to establish a special veterans' treatment court here in Westchester. Such a court will be a great help to returning veterans who find themselves caught up in the judicial system by providing peer mentoring, alternatives to incarceration and referral to a variety of services including treatment for post-traumatic stress, brain injury, substance abuse.

Protecting Nurses and Patients

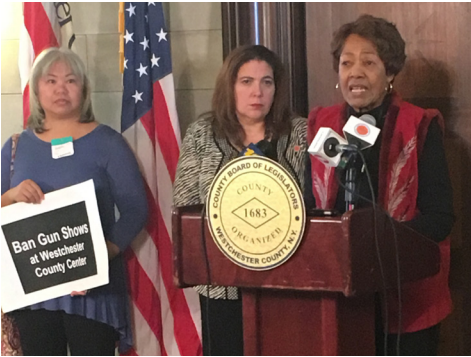
I was also happy to join the rest of the board in unanimously passing a resolution supporting state legislation to ensure safe staffing levels in hospitals and nursing homes to support quality of care, patient safety and good work environments. The Safe Staffing for Quality Care Act would authorize the New York State Department of Health to set minimum staffing requirements and enforce appropriate ratios of nursing and unlicensed direct care staff for all such facilities.

Banning Gun Shows on County-Owned Property

Gun violence is one of the most pressing issues of our time. I am proud that our first major piece of legislation this term was a law banning gun shows on County-owned property.

County-owned property should never be used as a place for people to obtain firearms or ammunition that could result in the death of county residents by suicide or gun violence.

I also joined my fellow legislators in passing a resolution to support a state "red flag" law that would allow a court to issue an order keeping guns out of the hands of people who have been shown to be dangerous to themselves or others.



Similar laws are already on the books in Connecticut, Indiana, Washington and California. We need common-sense legal tools to protect Westchester residents from the consequences of gun violence. ■

19th Annual Trailblazer Awards

I was so grateful this year to receive the Betty Shabazz Award for Social Justice at the 19th Annual Trailblazer Awards, particularly since the awards are sponsored by County Executive George Latimer, the African American Advisory Board and my peers at the Board of Legislators. It was a great honor.

I would like to congratulate my fellow award winners: Dr. Jim Bostic, Executive Director of the Nepperhan Community Center in Yonkers, who received the Jerome Holland Award for Leadership; Vikki L. Pryor, Managing Principal and Founder of Change Create Transform LLC, who received the Madame C. J. Walker Award



for Economic Development; and Frank Williams, Jr., Executive Director of the White Plains Youth Bureau, who received the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Award for Civic Engagement. ■

Fighting Wage Discrimination

Women and people of color often start their careers making less than other job seekers, and when future wages are tied to past salaries, the gap can become permanent.

To promote hiring equity and combat persistent gender- and race-based wage gaps, this year we banned questions about an applicant's prior salary during the hiring process.

Employers in Westchester can no longer ask about prior income when interviewing or deciding to interview a job seeker, or when setting the wages they're willing to offer.

The law also protects people who may have been laid off from higher-paying jobs and may now be seeking lower-paying work as well as people returning to the job market after a hiatus. ■

Holding Utilities Accountable for Poor Storm Response

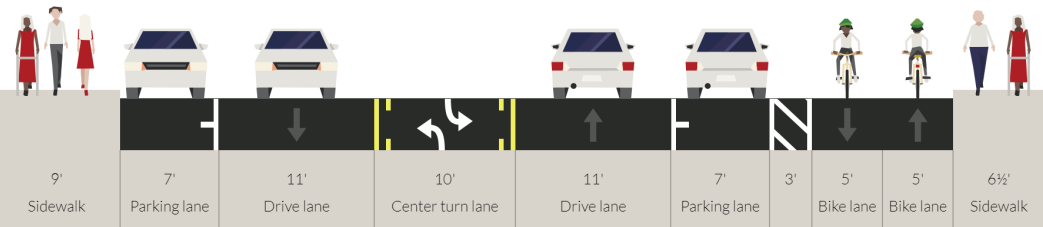
When violent storms ripped through the county leaving thousands of residents without power this year, the poor response by Consolidated Edison (Con Ed) revealed major problems in how the company communicates with customers, coordinates with local authorities and relies on outside help from utilities across the country after storms hit.

At the Board of Legislators we've been working hard to hold the utilities accountable for their actions. We convened multiple meetings with representatives from the companies to examine the flaws in the system. The Board has urged



the state's Public Service Commission to levy harsh fines against the utilities and to examine the broken system of relying on aid from far-away utilities to repair storm damage. Today this system ensures days of downtime waiting for help to arrive before restoration work begins after a major regional storm. ■

Rt. 119 Street Design Plan



A plan to create protected bike and walking lanes along the length of Route 119 is in the works.

The goal is to give bikers and others a safe and attractive access to this important thoroughfare from Tarrytown to White Plains and to connect to bike and walking paths along the new Gov. Mario M. Cuomo Bridge.

Pedestrian safety will be addressing with improvements to crosswalks, bus stops and lighting. The effort is being funded by New York State grants from the bridge project's Community Benefits Program.

The Steering Committee for the Route 119 Complete Street Design Plan has already undertaken two rounds of public meetings and conducted one public survey on design possibilities. The results of this outreach are currently being compiled into a report on design possibilities that will be available soon.

More information is available at [rt119complete.org](http://rt119complete.org) ■



Earned Sick Leave

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. Low-income and part-time workers were particularly unlikely to have access, and nationally 50% of Hispanic workers, 33% of black workers and 32% of Asian workers lack access to paid sick time.

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

Westchester County Airport

The county finally is moving forward in an open and transparent way to determine the best course of action for Westchester County Airport.

The quality of life for surrounding residents and protections for our environment will be critically important to any actions we take regarding the airport. Any decisions also must address the needs of taxpayers and airport customers.

The County Executive is preparing an addendum to the airport's current master plan and has held three open meetings to hear from the public on the master plan, airport governance, and issues like flight traffic, noise monitoring and environmental concerns.

Legislators have important roles to play in decision-making about the airport -- everything from vetting the newly-appointed members of the Airport Advisory Board, to reviewing the supplemental additions to the master plan, to working with the County Executive on the best options for airport governance and operations.