



Westchester County Legislator  
**CHRISTOPHER A. JOHNSON**  
*Proudly Serving the 16th District*



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**T**he New York State Legislature passed a package of voting reform laws, many of which have already taken effect. As a result, I had the opportunity to chair the Board of Legislators' Voting Reform Working Group, tasked with analyzing the new laws and exploring the effects they will have on voters and candidates in Westchester County. In addition, we assessed what adjustments to the County's Charter and the Board's rules would be necessary to implement these changes. Some of the important reforms you should know about include a consolidated primary election date (the fourth Tuesday in June), early voting, and easier options for voters who need to change their address. In addition, beginning in 2020, 16 and 17-year-olds will be able to pre-register to vote, so they will be automatically registered and eligible to vote on their 18th birthdays. For more information on these voting changes and others, please visit the Westchester County's Board of Elections website. ■





# Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

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



Winter 2019 Newsletter



## Christopher A. Johnson

District 16 ~ Yonkers

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It seems like just yesterday I was introducing myself to you as your new County Legislator, but believe it or not, that was almost two years ago. Since then I have had the honor of representing you and working with my colleagues to pass comprehensive legislation that strengthens Westchester County, but more importantly benefits and mirrors the values of residents of the 16th District. We have created laws aimed at preventing discrimination, protecting workers against bad labor practices, encouraging fair and affordable housing, supporting criminal justice reform, safeguarding our environment, and making sure county-owned public spaces that have been neglected, get the attention they deserve for all of our residents to enjoy.

I have had the pleasure of participating in and seeing many of you at meetings and events around the district. My office has welcomed your feedback on issues that interest you most; from Beeline Bus operations, to the pros and cons of potential legislation. I have enjoyed being able not just to govern, but to collaborate with you to ensure I am serving your needs appropriately and protecting the most vulnerable populations in our community. I look forward to our continued work together as we go into a new year. Without your continued support, I could not represent you effectively. Thank you so much and as always, if you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to reach out to my office.

All the best,



## THE 2020 WESTCHESTER COUNTY BUDGET

I am proud to have voted in favor of the 2020 Budget which adds \$10 million in new contributions to County fund balance, increases support for child care, domestic violence survivors, health care and more in partnership with nonprofits, triples funding for eviction prevention and commits to \$20 million in new funding for affordable housing.





## WELCOMED A BABY BOY

Just a few months ago, my wife and I welcomed our first child,  
***Joshua Joseph Johnson.***  
He has become the center of our world and the light of our lives.  
Already, he has even attended his first meeting!

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

I have supported several initiatives this year in favor of reforming our criminal justice system including state reforms to end cash bail (preserving the concept of innocent until proven guilty) and writing a letter to the Westchester District Attorney regarding the prosecution of individuals for low level marijuana offenses. When it comes to figuring out the extent to which we need to reform our criminal justice system, I believe it is extremely important we make careful decisions, based on extensive research. However, while we are taking the time to craft comprehensive legislation, something must be done to curtail the unfair prosecutorial treatment of Black and Hispanic individuals. We must end practices that are gateways for people to become cyclical members of the criminal justice system.



## SAFE LEAVE LAW

This year I joined my colleagues in creating a new law to protect victims of domestic violence and human trafficking in Westchester. Under this legislation, victims of domestic violence or human trafficking are entitled to take up to 40 hours of paid leave to attend or testify in court proceed-

ings related to their situations, to move from an abuser's residence, or to confer with lawyers or other advisers. This is a law that protects people when they are at their most vulnerable. No one who has been victimized should have to choose between their safety and their jobs, nor should they have to struggle to maintain their incomes when they are at their most fragile, through no fault of their own.

## DISPLACED WORKER LAW / CONTRACTORS LAW

It is important that as legislators we do more than just pass laws and hope they work out -- we must continually monitor their effectiveness and make changes if necessary to ensure that they continue to do what they were intended. That is just what we did this year when the Board voted to strengthen County protections for building service workers, like cleaning staff and maintenance personal, who face displacement when building ownership or service contracts change hands.

## HOMELESSNESS

It is no secret that many individuals in Yonkers, as in many places where gentrification is occurring, suffer from homelessness. These individuals, most of whom are natives of Yonkers, and some of whom have steady jobs, do not have a place to call home. In June 2019, the Sharing Community, a men's shelter located in Getty Square, was closed and the County sought an opportunity with the YWCA of Yonkers to open a new facility. The new men's drop-in shelter will be located on St. Casmir Avenue in Yonkers and should be

completed very soon. It is my top priority to make sure that people who need housing receive it, and that they get the services that come along with it. This year I was able to tour the shelters, meet some of its residents and get a firsthand look at what is needed most. I am excited for the new shelter to open, but I am also eager to continue advocating for more permanent affordable housing.



## EVICITION PROTECTION

I believe a critical step in curtailing the homeless epidemic is to keep people in their homes. In the 2019 Budget, I was able to secure \$200,000 for a pilot program that provides legal support for anyone in Yonkers who finds themselves in court facing eviction. I'm glad to say that to date, this funding has helped nearly 100 families stay in their homes. Unfortunately, many individuals were not able to be assisted. I am proud to have successfully advocated for tripling the funds for eviction protection, so that we can secure housing for more families. I'm also proud to have joined my colleagues this year in the passage of a resolution to support efforts in Albany, that strengthen and extend rent stabilization protections under New York's Emergency Tenant's Protection Act. That effort paid off when the state passed the legislation we advocated for ■

## VIEWS FROM THE 16TH (DISTRICT)

I pride myself on being out in the community getting to know the issue first hand and running into all of you. It's always a pleasure!

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY

This summer, my office hosted the first Young People's Assembly. The event, planned and hosted by our summer interns, brought together dozens of youth and eight different vendors including The Census Bureau; who showcased upcoming job opportunities, Yonkers Partners In Education; and Westchester Equal Opportunity Center; who provided educational programs and support. The event was a success and I look forward to hosting another one next year. If you know a young person who wants to be involved, reach out to my office for a potential internship opportunity. ■



## BLACK HISTORY MONTH CONCERT



I hosted my annual Black History Month Concert, but this year, I teamed up with the Council President's office in Yonkers and we expanded from gospel music to include other genres. We had people of all ages singing music ranging from opera to spirituals, all of which has been influenced by Black-Americans.

One of the best parts of this role is being able to engage with you, while I am out and about in the district. This summer, I co-sponsored a number of events and enjoyed seeing many of you! ■

## SPRAIN RIDGE POOL OPENED



The Board of Legislators and the County Executive had the responsibility of correctly renovating the Sprain Ridge Pool and we did just that! After years of false hopes, it finally opened for the public to enjoy this past summer. The new amenities include a renovated bathhouse, a competition pool that could hold 500 swimmers, and a larger grassy picnicking area. ■



Joined some students for a movie screening of "The Hate U Give"



Supporting NAACP at Diamondz N Da Rough Annual Back To School Drive



Spotted 2 Former YCPTA Presidents at My Brothers Keeper Event in Yonkers



Donated \$1,300 to Yonkers' Soup Kitchen