



Chairwoman of the Board &  
Westchester County Legislator  
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*Proudly Serving the 9th District*



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### Leveling the Playing Field for County Residents

Recognizing the importance of equity, this year the BOL passed a vital piece of legislation and supported the proposal of a state law that will level the playing field for all. The job market is very competitive in our post-COVID world. We know that there can be uncontrollable factors that make landing the job of your dreams a lot more difficult.

The **SALARY RANGE TRANSPARENCY LAW**, passed on May 9th, requires employers in Westchester County with more than four employees to include expected salary range when posting jobs to combat gender- and race-based pay inequity. This legislation was sponsored by Legislator Colin Smith (District 4) and myself.



At the press conference introducing the Salary Transparency Legislation

The Board backed the **NYS CLEAN SLATE ACT**, which automatically seals criminal records from civil review for qualifying people who have served their time and maintained a clean record. While the bill did not pass the State Assembly, we acknowledge the monumental effort that was pushed by the advocates in order for it to have been passed in the State Senate. We look forward to seeing this legislation return for consideration next session.

### Reopening to the Public

The Board of Legislators officially resumed in-person meetings on September 12, 2022. In order to provide fair civic involvement, we instituted a hybrid model, requiring participants to register through Webex (an online teleconferencing system) to participate remotely and attend via livestream, as well as permit physical attendance for all of its meetings. Aside from its bi-weekly Board meetings, all County legislative committee meetings are subject to the new model. Information on how to participate for Public Comment and Public Hearings by video conferencing, telephone, or in-person, can be found on the Board's website at [westchesterlegislators.com/meetings](http://westchesterlegislators.com/meetings).

# Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

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

Fall/Winter 2022 Newsletter

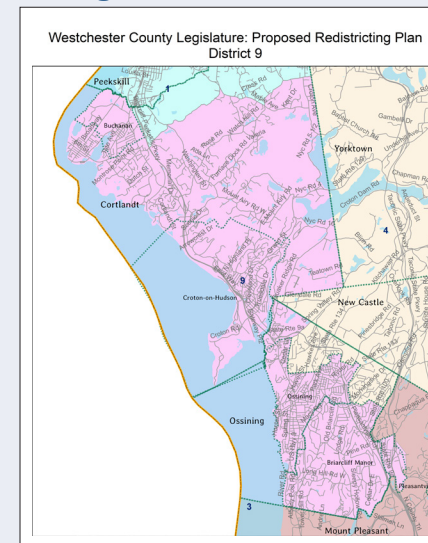


## Chair Catherine Borgia

District 9 ~ Cortlandt, Croton on Hudson, Ossining,  
Briarcliff Manor, Peekskill



### Reassessing Westchester County's Legislative Districts



A major undertaking at the Board has been the process of reassessing Westchester County's 17 legislative districts, as is required every ten years after a new census. The 2020 U.S. census revealed that our County's population had increased, putting us over the one million mark for the first time in our history. Because the increase is greater in some parts of the County than others, the challenge was to readjust the district lines to make the population of each district as equivalent as possible. We conducted five public input sessions throughout the County to engage residents in this important process. We worked to ensure that our legislative districts reflected our local municipalities accurately and accounted for our increased County population; the goal being equity in representation for all our residents.

Dear Neighbor,

I would like to express my hope that you are staying safe and taking good care of yourself. This has been quite an exciting year! In January, I was elected by my colleagues as the 2nd Chairwoman in the Board's history. I am incredibly grateful and honored to serve in this role during my last term at the Board of Legislators. I have worked tirelessly as your legislator since I was first elected to this position in 2012. As we approach my final year as a County Legislator, I can assure you that I will continue to represent my constituents and the residents of this County with the same vigor, if not more!

We have passed so many significant pieces of legislation in 2022, all of which I am extremely proud to have sponsored or supported. After more than a decade of attempts, I was finally able to carry the Reproductive Healthcare Facilities bill over the finish line at a time when it was needed most. This law ensures safe and harassment-free access to reproductive health care facilities across the County. We continue to work on equality in the workplace with the passage of the Salary Range Posting Law. We are working hard to provide protections to residents through our Restaurant Food Allergy Law, our Gun Store Warning Label Law, and our Flooding History Disclosure law. We most recently passed a resolution supporting the Clean Water, Clean Air, Green Jobs Bond Act, which will aide in improving current infrastructure to better prepare the state in the event of natural disasters as a result of climate change.

In the district, the ongoing effort to make sure Indian Point closes safely continues to be a main focus of mine. Legislator Colin Smith (District 1) and I are active in community meetings to advocate on the behalf of our constituents to ensure the transition goes safely and smoothly. My office is present at as many events as possible, and is always here to help if there is anything that you need at the County level. I pride myself on individual constituent services, so if you need assistance with an issue or have a question about services available, please contact my office at (914) 995-2812 or via e-mail at [Borgia@westchesterlegislators.com](mailto:Borgia@westchesterlegislators.com). Please do not hesitate to reach out with any comment, question, or concern. It is critically important to me that all voices are heard. I am always happy to speak with members of the community!

Let's keep moving forward and staying positive.

Yours truly,

Catherine Borgia  
Board Chair

After two years centered around the COVID pandemic, it was necessary for the Board to seek other ways to help keep the general public healthy in mind and body. We passed extensive and substantial legislation to address public health, safety, and well-being.

**THE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE FACILITIES ACCESS ACT**, a law that will protect health care workers and patients seeking medical treatment from being obstructed from entering or exiting a reproductive health care facility and from harassing behavior from persons within specific distances of the premises. It enacts a 25-foot no-harassment zone around the facility's perimeter and establishes the designation of an 8-foot personal space bubble surrounding the person within 100 feet of the facility. The bill, which took roughly over a decade to pass, was sponsored by Legislator MaryJane Shimsky (District 9) and myself, and signed immediately into law by County Executive George Latimer on June 27th.

State statistics show hate incidents have been on the rise since the coronavirus pandemic started. The majority of serious hate incidents are not addressed by federal and state laws because they do not rise to the level of criminal-



At the signing of the Reproductive Health Care Facilities Access Act

ity. It is for this reason that the Board passed a **HATE INCIDENT REPORTING LAW** requiring local police departments to report all bias-related crimes and incidents to the Commissioner of Public Safety. These incidents will also be tracked by the County's Human Rights Commission.

Studies show that households of lawful firearm owners are at a greater risk of victimization than households that do not own firearms. Understanding these statistics, the Board was able to pass a commonsense **FIREARM WARNING LABEL LAW**. This measure requires gun stores to post signs warning of the significantly increased risk of suicide, homicide, death during domestic disputes, and the accidental deaths of children or others to those who own firearms. The label also adds contact information for the County's Crisis Prevention and Response Team and the

National Suicide Hotline. Besides being displayed at retailers, the warning would also be given to people seeking gun licenses in Westchester.

We also unanimously passed a **FLOOD HISTORY DISCLOSURE FOR TENANTS**. This measure requires property owners to disclose the flood history of a building prior to the signing of a lease with a tenant. The measure applies to both residential and commercial leases. If flood history is not disclosed before a lease is signed, and a renter subsequently suffers flood damage, the law will give the renter the right to sue to recover damages. Landlords must make the disclosure if the property has flooded at least once during the ten years immediately preceding the date of the lease and has caused flood damage to any portion of the premises. If a renter sublets their property, they will also be responsible for disclosing the information.

Record-high inflation wreaked havoc on the economy beginning late spring of 2022. To counteract price increases, the County was able to use surplus sales tax revenue to fund relief measures aimed at keeping more money in your pocket. In partnership with County Executive George Latimer, we were able to deliver the following money-saving policies:

- **Gas Tax Holiday**, capping tax at \$0.12 per gallon from June 1 – August 31, 2022
- **No-Fare Bee-Line Buses** from June 1 – August 31; December 7 – 26, 2022
- **Free Weekday Admission to County pools and Glen Island Beach** from July 5 - August 31, 2022
- **Free Commuter Parking** at the North White Plains Commuter Lot and the County Center parking lot from July 1 – August 31, 2022
- **County Civil Service Exam Fee-Waivers** through December 31, 2022
- **Convened Round Table with Utility Companies** to combat spiking energy prices
- **Elimination of the sales tax on residential energy**, such as home heating oil, propane, natural gas, electric, coal, and wood, on a quarterly basis beginning December 1, 2022; the savings applies not only to homeowners, but to renters as well, depending on the structure of the unit's heat and electric use.
- The **Senior Citizens and Persons with Disabilities Home Owner's Tax Exemption**, which expands income eligibility for property tax exemptions by increasing the maximum household annual limit from \$29,000 to \$50,000; this allows more residents the ability to age in place within their current communities, especially those on fixed incomes by maintaining affordability.
- The **BOL unanimously approved the annual budget for SUNY Westchester Community College with a 0% tuition increase**; budget includes additional investment from the County of \$557,000 to maintain tuition affordability and marks the second consecutive year without a tuition increase.



Additionally, through the **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**, Westchester County was allocated \$187,926,698 in March 2021 and received its second installment of \$93,963,349 in June 2022.

### Spotlight on District 9 Improvements

Each Legislative District has specific needs to be met to improve the quality of life for those residents. Here are some important items the Board funded to help make District 9 a better place to live:

- The Ossining Basics Program which is designed to better prepare young children (birth to 3 yrs.) for school
- Rehabilitation of the Crotonville Pumping Station in Ossining
- A \$2 million replacement transformer to increase flood mitigation at the Ossining Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Acquired 2.4 acres of land on Maple St. in Croton to build 29 units of affordable housing
- Sewer modifications in Cortlandt



Celebrating Women's History Month



County's new Veterans' Service Agency Office Opening



COVID Update Press Conference



County Executive's announcement of the Landlord Tenant Assistance Program (LTAP)



Speaking at the Rally Against Hate



Clinic Access Press Conference