



Westchester County Legislator
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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 with more than four employees to include expected salary range when posting jobs to combat gender- and race-based pay inequity. Employers are now required to include an expected salary range when they post a job opportunity in Westchester.
- 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.



Our county parks provide vital recreation and respite for Westchester residents, which is why our investment in their maintenance and renovations is so important. Infrastructure upgrades are also very impactful to our quality of life, whether they ease transportation, refurbish public structures, or mitigate the effects of severe climate incidents.

Capital improvements at **SUNY WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE**, the County's largest academic institution, will include roof replacements where needed, infrastructure upgrades in the Academic Arts, Science, and Maintenance Buildings, and technology updates for improved communication both on and off campus.

Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Fall/Winter 2022 Newsletter



Terry Clements

District 11 ~ New Rochelle, Pelham, Pelham Manor
 Chair, Public Safety Committee

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It is an honor and privilege to represent the people of Pelham, Pelham Manor, and New Rochelle on the Westchester County Board of Legislators. I would like to thank the residents of our unique and resilient community for your continued support during these challenging times.

At the Board, we are working hard to support residents in this post-pandemic era. Using County surplus sales tax revenue, in partnership with County Executive George Latimer, we were able to deliver many money-saving benefits to our residents. We continue to improve our aging infrastructure and protect the rights of families, seniors, and immigrants. The BOL passed extensive and substantial legislation to address public health, safety, and well-being. Our goal is to help keep our residents healthy in mind, body, and spirit.

I currently serve as the Chair of the Public Safety Committee. One of my first endeavors was an updated school safety brochure for parents and teachers entitled "School Safety." The publication provides resources available from the Westchester County Youth Bureau, such as anti-bullying strategies, defensive measures to combat violence in schools, crisis intervention training, and suicide prevention and awareness.

Along with my colleagues and other county agencies, we are committed to identifying and developing health and safety measures so Westchester residents can live and work without

fear in our community. 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.



National Night Out in New Rochelle

The Board of Legislators has officially adopted the report of the County's Police Reform and Reimagining Task Force. The 177-page report contains 51 recommendations, a blueprint for police reform intended to promote more equitable policing in Westchester. As a member of the Westchester County Police Reform and Reimagining Task Force, I am excited to continue implementing Task Force recommendations to foster trust and confidence in the WCPD and vice versa. As a result of our work, the first item we rolled out was a mental health crisis response program called Project Alliance, giving 911 dispatchers the ability to identify and refer individuals to the Crisis Network Team, staffed by St. Vincent's Hospital personnel.

As a member of the Complete Count Committee, the entire County-wide committee was committed to ensuring an accurate count of all Westchester residents. The results of the 2020 Census helped determine how billions of dollars in federal funding will flow into our community every year for the next decade. Besides fund allocations, the Census required the BOL to reassess Westchester County's 17 legislative districts, based on the population changes in County. We conducted five public input sessions throughout the County to engage residents in this important process.

We continue to clean up the environment with new and innovative solutions to environmental issues, food scrap recycling programs, green procurement, and increasing the number of new electric buses for the County's Bee-Line fleet. The BOL recognizes the immediate need to act and protect our environment in the face of global warming.

I would love to hear from you. With frequent communication, we can resolve issues and make Westchester County one of the best communities to reside in.

Thank you again for your support,

Sincerely,

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.

Hate Incident Reporting



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 criminality. It is for this reason that the Board passed a Hate Incident Reporting law requiring all 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.

Firearm Warning Label



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 those with access to firearms of the significantly increased risks of suicide, homicide, death during domestic disputes, and the accidental deaths of children or others. 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.

Food Allergy Safety



Food allergies are a major health concern for many Westchester families and people across the nation, especially when it comes to choosing where or whether to dine out. In fact, every 3 minutes in the U.S., a food allergy reaction sends someone to the emergency room, and around 1 in 11 Westchester residents live with food allergies. In an effort to further educate restaurant owners and employees on the dangers of food allergies, the

Board approved a Food Allergy Safety Training law. The bill also requires the posting of signs certifying that employees have completed the training, lists the nine major food allergies, as well as symptoms of an allergic reaction and actions to take in cases of a reaction.

Flood History Disclosure



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, 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.

- **Free Weekday Admission to County pools and Glen Island Beach** from July 5 - August 31, 2022



- **The BOL unanimously approved the annual budget for SUNY Westchester Community College with zero tuition increase.** The budget includes an additional investment from the County of \$557,000 to maintain tuition affordability for its largest academic institution amid record-high inflation. This marks the second consecutive year without a tuition

rate increase. The total budget appropriated is roughly \$149.5 million.

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. The County has until December, 31, 2024 to obligate the funds according to the Federal guidelines, and has allocated them to these critical areas:

- Public Health Investment
- Healthy Mom, Healthy Baby Home Visiting Program
- Non-profit Grant Program
- Small Business Development Assistance
- Tourism & Hospitality Development and Promotion
- Workforce Development Job Training
- Affordable Housing Development & Multi-Family Unit Rehabilitation
- Wastewater Infrastructure
- Revenue Replacement



Juneteenth Celebration at Lincoln Park, New Rochelle



Senior Dance in Glen Island Park w/Sen. Shelley Mayer



Eagle Scout Court of Honor at the Temple



A Special Mother's Day event at the Boys & Girls Club



Honoring Dr. Nandini Anandu at our AAPI Heritage Celebration



Hearts and Homes for Refugees resettlement program w/Kathie O'Callaghan, President and Founder