

Westchester County Legislator
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Proudly Serving the 10th District



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Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Winter 2024/25 Newsletter



Judah Holstein

District 10 ~ Eastchester, Tuckahoe, New Rochelle
Chair, Committee on Information Technology & Cybersecurity



Dear Friends & Neighbors,

My first year as your County Legislator has been filled with exciting accomplishments, meaningful connections, and significant challenges. As chair of the IT and Cybersecurity Committee, we heard from numerous experts about how advances in technology such as AI, high-definition IP cameras, AirTags, and other Smart devices, are being used for good and also for nefarious purposes. We are exploring ways to provide resources to our community members and municipalities to protect our communities from attacks and threats. I am also very proud to have worked closely with the District Attorney's office to identify gaps in the law surrounding the abuse of emerging technologies like AI, which led to my Misuse of Digital Deception legislation, which is on track to become law by the end of the year. Seniors and youth are particularly vulnerable to digital exploitation, and we want to make sure that perpetrators are held accountable.



The Board successfully advocated for the restoration of Foundation Aid for our schools, ensuring our children are given the best possible education, we passed domestic violence legislation to support victims of abuse, and we once again offered free buses during the summer months. We also funded the Stella II affordable condominiums in New Rochelle, bringing the dream of equity to young first-time buyers. In addition, we have been working to promote tourism ahead of the 250th anniversary of the United States, which will bring national attention to our community. Supporting new businesses that have joined our community has also been central to fostering growth and prosperity in our district.



We've begun to take important new steps toward addressing flooding, although there is still much to be done. We're working with the county's newly hired Director of Flood Mitigation along with other municipal officials, and I expect this will facilitate progress toward mitigating future flood risks and getting funding to make these projects possible.



Sadly, I have also witnessed incidents of divisiveness and hate in our community. Bigotry and racism toward any resident or business is terrible, especially when our children are targeted. I continue to encourage our community on the importance of experiencing the cultures of our neighbors and fostering a willingness to listen to one another, even when the conversations are uncomfortable. By building mutual respect, we reduce the potential for conflict and create a safer, more unified environment where everyone can thrive. I remain committed to continuing this work and building on the progress we've made together. Thank you for the trust you've placed in me—I'm excited to keep working to further improve the quality of life in District 10.

Sincerely,

TOP TO BOTTOM: The Real Time Crime Center with Commissioner Terrence Raynor, Minority Whip Terry Clements, and Detective Brian Hess; Speaking out about proposed state cuts to Foundation Aid Funding for schools with the Board of Legislators; Standing against antisemitism at the Golden Horseshoe

2024 LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

Technology & Cybersecurity

TRAFFIC AND CRIMINAL SOFTWARE (TRACS): Continuation of this program will bolster road safety and efficiency by streamlining electronic traffic ticket and accident report processing to give police more time to focus on public safety instead of administrative tasks like data entry.

DIGITAL DECEPTION LEGISLATIVE: My Digital Deception legislation will help ensure that people who use AI and other emerging digital tools to harm or defraud people can be properly prosecuted even when current laws may not account for these emerging technologies. The board hasn't passed it yet, but it's coming quickly!

Public Safety

SAFETY MEASURES FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS: The Board passed legislation to provide free home locks and security cameras for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence. Developed with the Westchester County Office for Women, the County Executive's Office, and Pace Women's Justice Center, this Act enhances safety for victims.

PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINTS SYSTEM (PSAP): A \$1.3 million investment to modernize the county's critical 911 Call Centers to enhance security and responsiveness for residents' emergency calls.

STOP ARM LEGISLATION: This legislation will strengthen protections for children at school bus stops, in an effort to ensure their safety on the roads.

Infrastructure & Transportation

ROADWAY CULVERT RESTORATION: This Bond Act finances a project to inspect and evaluate culvert structures along County

roads. It will address flooding and determine necessary maintenance, rehabilitation, or replacement, establishing a priority-based schedule.

BEE-LINE BUSES: The Board approved replacing 95 old buses with new hybrid and electric models and upgrading bus shelters with solar power, ADA accessibility, and other improvements.

The Board also suspended Bee-Line Bus Fares for the third summer and holiday season.

Environment

FOOD SCRAP RECOVERY PROGRAM: A \$1.3 million capital project and Bond Act for the study, design and development of a major composting facility to reduce County waste and generate compost.

Housing

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: As of September, the Board approved funding for land acquisitions, development, and rehabilitation in several municipalities: 528 rental units in Mount Vernon; 583 in Yonkers; 404 in White Plains; 128 condominiums in New Rochelle; and 180 rental units in Ossining. In total, 1,821 Affordable Housing units are planned with amenities like parking and community rooms, and marketed by income eligibility.

AFFORDABLE CONDOMINIUMS IN NEW ROCHELLE: Included in the 1821 affordable housing units this year are 128 condominiums at the Stella II site right here in District 10, which will not only give opportunities for seniors and workforce families to stay in Westchester, but also gives them an opportunity to build equity and share in the American Dream. I am so proud to have been able to help pass this

particular piece of legislation and maybe make someone's dreams come true!

FIVE-YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN: The plan authorizes the submission of a comprehensive plan and the Fiscal Year 2024 Action Plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Developed with input from residents and community groups, this plan will enable the County to apply for funding for crucial housing and development projects benefiting the 31 municipalities in the Westchester Urban County Consortium.

Taxes

SENIOR PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS: Excludes Social Security income from eligibility calculations, increasing relief for seniors with fixed incomes.

COUNTY PROPERTY TAX LINE HELD: The 2025 County Budget maintains the same County property tax rate as 2024, marking the sixth consecutive year without a tax levy increase.

SCHOOL FUNDING RESTORED: Proposed cuts to Foundation Aid by the Governor threatened to reduce funding by \$20 million across Westchester County's 40 public school districts. The Board held a press conference and wrote a letter to the Governor, opposing these cuts. Fortunately, the reductions were averted, and Foundation Aid funding was reinstated. ■



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