

Westchester County Legislator

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Westchester County Initiative to Help Residents Reclaim Unclaimed Funds

Last November, my office joined forces with the New York State Comptroller and sent mailers to the residences of more than 3,000 individuals in the Town of Greenburgh who we confirmed had unclaimed funds they were entitled to retrieve. The funds are typically the result of bank transactions, insurance claims, estate settlements and other remittances that either never made it to the intended recipient or were never acted upon. We supplemented this effort with an in-person workshop at the Hastings-on-Hudson Public Library that was attended by the Comptroller and his staff, who helped process claims and answer questions. Claims varied, with one instance turning up more than \$100,000 dollars for a senior who was receiving round-the-clock in-home care and had let his mail pile up. News12, the Hudson Independent and others covered the initiative, which has now expanded Countywide in cooperation with the entire Board of Legislators and County Executive's office. Roughly 65,000 new letters were sent out in September from Mount Vernon to North Salem, and workshops were scheduled across Westchester throughout the fall, so open that neglected snail-mail and contact my office with any questions. ■



Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Winter 2024/25 Newsletter



David Imamura

District 12 ~ Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Edgemont, Hartsdale, Hastings-on-Hudson, Irvington
Chair, Law & Major Contracts



Dear Friends & Neighbors,

It has been an eventful 2024 so far, and I wanted to make sure you were up to date on all the ways my office has been working to support the community over the past year.



LEGISLATION: On June 18, County Executive George Latimer signed into law the Safety Measures for Survivors of Domestic Violence Act, a bill I introduced to the Board of Legislators and co-sponsored along with Legislator Emiljana Ulaj (D-9). This new law ensures that domestic violence survivors across Westchester will have free access to new home locks and security cameras to protect them and their families from ongoing abuse. Passage was made possible with my colleagues' unanimous, bipartisan support, as well as crucial assistance from the County's Office for Women and Pace Women's Justice Center. View the press conference announcing its signage at <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=j9QpFzqDxMa>.

The Board also adopted a bill co-sponsored by Legislator Shanae Williams (D-16) and I requiring inclusion of Area Median Income (AMI) and Local Area Median Income by the Westchester County Department of Planning when a Capital Project that includes affordable housing units is presented to the Westchester County Planning Board. As Chair of the Law & Major Contracts Committee, I am hopeful this will help level the playing field

of affordability for County residents in the fight for fair housing.

ADDRESSING FLOODING: My office continues to strategize with state and local agencies and officials and community advocates on how to mitigate flooding and be responsive to the effects of climate change. I recently joined several of my elected counterparts for a walking tour of flood sites spanning the entire Saw Mill River Parkway guided by Groundwork Hudson Valley, have been proactively meeting with the County's new Director of Flood Mitigation and Resiliency, and am proactively pursuing funding for further mitigation.

I am also pleased to share that an Act adopted by the Board authorized the County to issue up to \$450,000 in bonds to finance costs associated with a comprehensive engineering analysis of a flood mitigation project for the Hartsdale Brook area in the Town of Greenburgh.

NONPROFIT FUNDING: My office awarded funding over this past year to worthy institutions and causes ranging from Shames JCC and the Irvington Shakespeare Festival to Nonprofit Westchester and the Greenburgh Nature Center. These funds enable nonprofits and grassroots efforts in our district and beyond to better serve the spectrum of community needs and maintain basic operations, and it is my pleasure and privilege to help ensure their sustainability.

On the topic of supporting community organizations, longtime local journalism outlet The Hudson Independent is a nonprofit that relies heavily on reader and community donations. Visit <https://thehudsonindependent.com/donate> for more on how you can help sustain their efforts. And in a similar vein, the recently launched Ri-

vertowns Dispatch is a new and welcome addition to the local-journalism landscape that relies on subscribers to continue its coverage of all things Rivertowns. You can learn more about how to support by visiting <https://www.rivertownsdispatch.com/membership/>. Other hyper-local outlets that cover the Rivertowns and Town of Greenburgh and are worthy of readership and patronage include River Journal, Neighborhood Buzz, Patch and Daily Voice.



AAPI ADVOCACY: During the 2023-'24 fiscal cycle, my office awarded tens of thousands of dollars to Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) organizations across Westchester. Concurrently, my staff and I worked hand-in-hand with a broad coalition of local AAPI advocates and sent letters to all County public school districts recommending the inclusion of Eid and Diwali as recognized holidays and integration of AAPI education into curriculums.

And as always, I encourage anyone to contact my office any time with questions, concerns or suggestions on how we can improve everybody's quality of life. Thank you for your continued feedback and collaboration.

Sincerely,

KEY COUNTY LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

PROMOTING PUBLIC SAFETY

As legislators, our foremost duty is to safeguard our residents—whether at home, on County roads, or facing public safety concerns.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION TASK FORCE: A recent CDC report shows U.S. gun deaths at a 30-year high, with firearm injury the leading cause of death among children and teens. The Board and County Executive have launched a County-wide Gun Violence Prevention Task Force.

ANTI-TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE PROGRAM ACT: Supports the District Attorney's office and local law enforcement in combating human trafficking in Westchester County. Funded by a Department of Justice grant, the Task Force will improve victim identification, investigative methods, and prosecution strategies, partnering with police to target trafficking hotspots. ■

GREEN ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INITIATIVES

These measures to combat climate change and boost composting and recycling reflect the Board's commitment to a cleaner, safer, and more sustainable Westchester County.

FLOOD MITIGATION BOND ACT: Provides \$2 million to enhance flood planning and grant applications, complementing the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Resilient NY program for broader flood mitigation.

FOOD SCRAP RECOVERY PROGRAM: Supported by 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 valuable compost.

BEE-LINE BUSES & BUS SHELTER RENOVATIONS: The Board approved replacing 95 old 40-foot buses with new hybrid and all-electric models and upgrading bus shelters with solar power, ADA accessibility, and other improvements. ■



COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECH UPGRADES

Investments in infrastructure and technology, from pump stations to water treatment plants and sewers, are crucial for our residents' quality of life.

PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINTS SYSTEM (PSAP) BOND ACT: A \$1.3 million investment to modernize 911 Call Centers that handle emergency calls and coordinate responses.

PUMPING STATION REHABILITATION PROGRAM: An \$18 million bond to fund improvements at the Mamaroneck Water Resource Recovery Facility, enhancing infrastructure and efficiency.

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. ■

ENHANCEMENTS TO COUNTY PARKS

From the Hudson River to the Sound Shore, Westchester offers a variety of outdoor spaces. Keeping our parks in top shape is a priority.

PARKLAND AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM: Revitalizes a segment of the RiverWalk trailway in Tarrytown, upgrading the trail and its infrastructure. Part of the Westchester Legacy Program, this initiative enhances the RiverWalk experience and helps preserve over 2,000 acres of open space.

ALMA FIELD TURF REPLACEMENT AND EXPANSION: At Flint Park in Larchmont, this \$2.2 million project will enhance the sports field with new lighting, seating, picnic areas, scoreboards, and drainage systems, improving facilities for all County residents.

MOHANSIC GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE AND RECREATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS: Upgrades the Yorktown Heights facility with enhanced electrical services, a new maintenance complex, and modernized recreational areas to boost energy efficiency and the visitor experience. ■

AROUND THE DISTRICT



Clockwise from top left: Bagging groceries at ShopRite in Elmsford to raise money for local food banks; with County Executive George Latimer (second from left) and State Assemblymember MaryJane Shimsky (third from left) at an All Star Cricket tournament in Croton-on-Hudson; helping the owners of Club Car Grille in Irvington cut their grand-opening ribbon; celebrating the Chinese New Year at the County offices; honoring India Day outside the County building; with County Executive Latimer at the County's AAPI Heritage Event at Kensico Dam.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

In addition to enacting legislation, the Board addressed issues in social and economic justice to benefit all Westchester residents:

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.

COMMITMENT TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING: The Board's commitment to expanding Affordable Housing is stronger than ever in 2024, focusing on municipalities throughout Westchester County.

As of September, the Board approved funding for land acquisitions, new development, and housing 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.

ADVANCING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING FOR COUNTY RESIDENTS: A \$1 million bond will fund the reopening of a mental health clinic in White Plains, providing

essential support for individuals with urgent mental health needs and meeting increasing demand for services.

SENIOR PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS: Now excludes Social Security income from eligibility calculations, making more seniors eligible for relief. This change, approved by New York State, provides greater financial support to seniors with fixed incomes. ■

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