



Westchester County Legislator
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Proudly Serving the 9th District



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What Do You Think? I'm curious to know your thoughts about some of the issues facing Westchester County. Playland raises a lot of concerns with people but often evokes a lot of memories. I wanted to use our questionnaire space to address this issue more. Please tear off this short survey and return it to me at:
Catherine Borgia, Westchester County Board of Legislators, 148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor, White Plains, New York 10601

1) What types of events are your favorites at Playland? Rides Concerts the Beach

Comments _____

2) What would you like to see at Playland Park in the future?

3) What are some of your family's best memories of Playland?

Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Summer 2013 Newsletter



Catherine Borgia

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

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It's an exciting time in Westchester County, where we have the opportunity to work hard, work smart, and work together to create a better future for the County we all love. As chair of the Government Operations committee, which provides legislative oversight of the Department of Public Works & Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Planning, Housing, and Labor relations, I've had the opportunity to evaluate and bring to bipartisan approval hundreds of critical capital projects to repair and rebuild our aging infrastructure, refurbish and rebuild county parks and other valuable county assets, create jobs for Westchester residents, and boost the local economy. We've approved almost \$50 million in infrastructure improvement in the first six months of 2013 alone.



Legislator Borgia congratulates Anderson Gomez, an Ossining High School recipient of a Jandon Scholarship.

The Board of Legislators maintains a "dashboard" feature on our website: www.westchesterlegislators.com so that the public can monitor the county's progress on all of the projects passed by the Board of Legislators over the past several years.

In addition to chairing Government Operations, I serve on the Budget & Appropriations, Legislation, Community Services, and Environment & Energy committees, which are all working to solve problems and improve services in Westchester.

My first term has also been one of legislative success, as bills I introduced and sponsored became laws after receiving bipartisan support from my legislative colleagues. These include: a bill to help small plumbing and electrical businesses get licensed to install solar panels; a law that banned the use and treatment of hydrofracking waste in Westchester; the formation of an LDC that has more oversight and transparency and confirms to the NYS Comptroller's recommended guidelines; and a law that changes the County's Charter to remove an obstacle for police departments wishing to enter into an inter-municipal agreement with Westchester County for police services to save taxpayer dollars and enhance police services (see articles inside).

Although we still have many challenges ahead of us, I believe the people of Westchester have the talent and the determination to rise to meet any opportunity before us. I look forward to continued collaboration with you to secure Westchester's bright future.

Sincerely,

Cathy

A Follow-Up to Your Opinions

My winter newsletter asked for your opinions on several important issues. I enjoyed reading your responses and would like to share the results of that survey.

Do you favor more housing for middle income families in your community?

41% Yes
 29% No
 12% Maybe
 11% Don't know
 6% Need definition of "middle income"

Do you think the county should invest more money in infrastructure like roads, bridges, and parks?

72% Yes
 17% Maybe
 11% No

Do you favor a ban on hydrofracking?

48% Favor a ban
 32% Do not favor a ban
 18% Need more information

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Cabelvision Public Access Channel 15:

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Ossining GO-TV, various times

County Board Passes Groundbreaking Hydrofracking Waste Ban to Protect Drinking Water

No Waste Treated in Sewage Treatment Plants or Brine on Roads for Dust Control or De-icing

The Westchester County Board of Legislators has passed groundbreaking legislation, of which I was proud to be a primary sponsor, that will protect the county's fragile drinking water supplies from the dangerous impacts of hydrofracking waste disposal. The legislation received bipartisan support and was signed by the County Executive in December.

Hydrofracking techniques create a great volume of by-products in the form of chemical "brine" and chemical salts. Gas producers need an economical way to treat or dispose of this waste. One of the techniques the companies use for disposal is to pass on their fracking liquid to local governments for low or no cost, to use on roadways as a de-icing agent or for dust control. The problem is that the liquid contains high levels of industrial pollutants and radioactivity. Companies also have tried disposing their waste in sewage treatment plants, which are not designed for this purpose -- thereby damaging the facilities while releasing poisons into our water.

Westchester County has led the way by passing the most comprehensive law banning the use, transfer or storage of hydrofracking waste on all roads and treatment plants in Westchester, both public and private. Since Westchester's law was passed, both Putnam and Rockland counties have passed similar laws. ■

Greater Ossining Chamber of Commerce Breakfast: Westchester is Open for Your Small Business

On Tuesday May 14, 2013, the Greater Ossining Chamber of Commerce invited me to speak to local businesses at an event entitled "Westchester County Open for Business Breakfast." The breakfast meeting attracted over 30 local business owners to a morning of networking, learning and collaboration. I made a presentation on the services and outlets available to businesses in Westchester County, then opened the conversation to address questions, concerns and ideas the business owners wished to discuss. Two big topics of discussion were how to develop an internship program for a small business, and guidance about the process by which small Westchester businesses can bid on County work. I'm looking forward to scheduling many more such events with local business organizations. ■



County Board Passes Legislation to Facilitate Police Mergers

Saves Taxpayers Money, Enhances Public Safety

Earlier this term, I introduced legislation that passed with unanimous, bi-partisan support that revised the County Charter to remove a barrier enabling local municipal police departments to more easily share services with the Westchester County Police, saving taxpayers money and enhancing public safety. Under prior law, the County's Department of Public Safety could contract with a municipality for specific policing duties. With this law, the county may now provide total delivery of police services. As Ossining Town Supervisor, I negotiated a contract with the County to provide policing services to the Town of Ossining, saving taxpayers up to \$1 million every year. This Charter change was not required for that agreement because Ossining had two police officers who were maintained on the Town's payroll.

This is a good step to help other

municipalities follow the lead of the Towns of Ossining and Cortlandt in finding ways to provide critical services at a lower cost. This is smart governing at its best: by eliminating duplicate administrative and command and control structures, taxpayers save money. Public safety is enhanced because of the additional resources the County Police possess. In Ossining, the agreement has been very successful, with equal service provided at lower costs to taxpayers. And police officers like the opportunities working for the County gives them. It's a win-win-win for the county, the taxpayers, and public safety goals.

Any Inter-Municipal Agreement must be negotiated to be cost-neutral to the County and then mutually approved by both the County Board of Legislators and the municipality's governing body. ■

Local Development Corporation Passed Into Law By County Board

Low Interest Financing For Not For Profits – Northern Westchester Hospital Center Approved for \$49 Million for Operating Suites

The Westchester County Board of Legislators, working with the County Executive's Office, passed legislation creating a Westchester County Local Development Corporation (LDC) to issue bonding obligations that act in the public interest and help generate capital expansion projects spearheaded by county not-for-profits. One of the first issuances approved was \$49 million in low cost financing for Northern Westchester Hospital Center to construct new, state of the art operating suites.

The final legislation, which was reviewed and improved in the Government Operations committee that I chair, as well as the Legislation committee, of which I am a member of, ensures appropriate oversight and transparency for taxpayers, and offers our not-for-profits a tool that can empower them to grow, expand and create jobs both in the short- and the long-term.

Financing or refinancing of financial obligations through the LDC is at no cost to the taxpayers of Westchester. ■



▲ Great news for music, dance, and other performing arts lovers: the Paramount Theater in Peekskill has reopened.



▲ Mock Legislature in Ossining's Roosevelt School: Here are the future leaders of Westchester, New York State and the nation!

The State of Mental Health in Westchester County

Knowing the Facts and Knowing Your Resources

I recently taped an episode of my TV show, Hudson Valley News and Views, with Dr. Grant Mitchell, Westchester's Commissioner of Community Mental Health, to talk about what mental health services are available to us in Westchester, and what to do if you feel in need of services for yourself or a loved one.

Throughout history, mental illness has been considered a sign of inferiority, and recent violent events have been attributed to mental illness as well. This isolates people who need help and makes their families slower to intervene. "People are all too willing to talk about it if they break their leg," said Dr. Mitchell, "but they are afraid to address anything about their mental health because of the stigmas surrounding it." Recognizing the signs in your family and friends can be the first step in getting them help. A person's sudden lack of interest in something that they once enjoyed can be a signal that something is happening. Changes in social and personal behavior aren't always acknowledged as a sign of trouble.

Westchester County offers many services directly related to mental health. We discussed the non-profit community mental health centers around the county that provide help regardless of a person's financial situation. Sliding scales are used to make the care affordable and accessible to the public. It is a misconception that you need expensive insurance to get these resources.

There is also a 24-hour crisis helpline available every day of the week for those who need to reach out for help. ■