



Westchester County Legislator  
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*Proudly Serving the 9th District*



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# Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Summer 2015 Newsletter

## Catherine Borgia

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

**✂ What Do You Think?** I'm curious to know your thoughts about some of the issues facing Westchester County. 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) Do you believe the minimum age for cigarette purchase should be changed?  
 No, it should remain at 18     Yes, it should be changed to 19     Yes, it should be changed to 21
  
- 2) Do you favor a separate court to for Veteran's that commit non-violent crimes?  
 Yes     No     Need more information
  
- 3) Do you feel the county does enough to advertise the promotions at Playland each season?  
 Yes     No     I did not know there were promotions
  
- 4) In general, when you think about local taxes and the services that local government provides, which of the following are you most in favor of?  
 More local government services and higher taxes in order to pay for them  
 Keep both taxes and services about the same  
 Provide fewer services and lower local taxes  
 Don't know/No opinion
  
- 5) Do you favor the County Executive's proposal to place an "economic development" office on Park Avenue in Manhattan with taxpayer dollars?  
 Yes     No     Need more information

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The first half of 2015 has been an exciting time at the County Board of Legislators. 2014 ended with the review of the County Executive's "Credit Card" budget, and as 2015 began, we passed legislation protecting the children of Westchester, worked to ensure clean air inside all workplaces, made sure all county policies keep in mind all residents regardless of age, and much more.

We have been working hard to make sure county government is doing all it can to provide the best possible services for all residents of Westchester and remain affordable for everyone.

I believe in a county government that best utilizes its resources to help all of those who choose to make Westchester their home. This belief is what we strive to make a reality every day. Please feel free to send me your input and ideas through mail, email, or the comment section included in this newsletter. This section also includes some survey questions which help me to gauge how to best serve you.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to submit your answers to the questions and I look forward to hearing your responses.

Sincerely,

**WATCH Hudson Valley News and Views**  
 for information about issues, people and programs in our region.

**Cabelvision Public Access Channel 15:**  
 Saturdays, 11 AM  
 Wednesdays, 9:30 PM  
 Ossining GO-TV, various times

## Response to the State of the County: A Better Way to Do More for Westchester Taxpayers

Response to the State of the County: A Better Way to Do More for Westchester Taxpayers

Every year the County Executive delivers an update on Westchester County's activities and lays out plans for the future during the State of the County Address. As the Majority Leader, I had the opportunity to deliver the Democratic response to this year's address. I believe that there is a better way to do more for Westchester taxpayers.

The 2015 County budget relies heavily on borrowing and spending money from the future to pay current operating expenses; that's like running up a credit card debt on a fixed income. Westchester families can't run up their credit card debt excessively to pay for daily expenses—its bad fiscal planning for your family... and it's wrong for your government to do it too.

Both a Citizens Budget Committee and independent auditors stated that these fiscal policies are irresponsible and will force higher property taxes for years to come.

We have found ways to save money by being smarter about how we spend. Our top priority is making sure that every dollar goes as far as possible to do more for everyone in Westchester. ■

## Westchester Creates Office of Energy Director to Improve Efficiency and Environment



The new office of the Energy Director would be charged with finding opportunities for grants and funding for energy efficient upgrades to infrastructure and net significant savings in energy costs to the county incorporating technologies that would reduce dependence on carbon and in turn reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

This legislation followed similar models of Energy Director Positions that have been created by municipalities in the region, including Yonkers, New York City and Philadelphia. These individuals in other places have already saved taxpayers significant amounts of money by implementing cost-saving measures that are environmentally-focused.

Families all over the county have taken steps to become more energy efficient and realize real savings every month as a result. It is long overdue that this county takes steps in the same direction by creating a Westchester County Energy Director. ■

## Why She Ran



From L-R Yonkers City Councilwoman Corazon Pineda, County Legislator Catherine Borgia, Assembly Member Shelley Mayer, Senator Ruth Hassel-Thompson

Since 1917, there have only been 313 women elected to congress yet we make up about half of the country's population; at the Board of Legislators, nearly half of the Legislators are women. I've always looked up to the elected leaders in the community and I'm honored to walk in many of their footsteps. As a result, I feel that it is my duty to help the next generation of leaders by sharing my story at and using it to encourage more women to run for office.

I recently had several opportunities to appear on panels with other elected women in Westchester County, State Senator Ruth Hassel-Thompson, Assemblywoman Shelley Mayer and Yonkers City Councilwoman Corazon Pineda. All three of these women are remarkable leaders and inspired me every time I hear their stories.

The mission of these forums is very important and is part of a larger fact that our government can do more when more people are involved and working collaboratively to improve the community. ■

## Fall/Winter Interns

Each legislator at the County Board are given the chance to utilize interns. My office is currently accepting resumes for the fall and winter seasons. This, unpaid, opportunity affords area high school and college students



the chance to work on legislative, constituent, and press related work. This involves researching legislation, working on issues in the community, and numerous opportunities to enhance each student's professional writing skills.

Internships are a great way to learn the skills necessary to succeed in any professional setting. An internship in a political office differs because it also gives the intern opportunity to work on issues which have a direct effect on the community they live in. This experience helps to shape our next generation of leaders.

If you are interested, or know anyone who would be interested, in pursuing an internship in my office, please call Omar Herrera or Joseph Sgammato at (914)995-2838, or email Omar (ojha@westchestergov.com) or Joe (jns4@westchestergov.com). ■

## BOL Takes Action to Prevent Sale of Toxic Toys to Children

Earlier this year I authored and introduced the "Children's Product Safety Act." An Act which unanimously passed the Board of Legislators on May 11, will prevent the sale of infant and children's products that include harmful toxic chemicals such as formaldehyde, benzene, lead, mercury, antimony, arsenic, cadmium and cobalt within the County of Westchester.

The toxic chemicals in children's products have been linked to a host of serious medical problems including learning and developmental disabilities, asthma, pediatric and other cancer, infertility, obesity and more.

The Children's Product Safety Act will be enforced by the County Department of Consumer Protection. The department would undertake a 12 month public education campaign to alert retailers of which chemicals are harmful and then with random spot checks of products already on shelves.

Similar pieces of legislation have already passed the Albany County Legislature



and are being considered in Suffolk, Dutchess and Onondaga counties. The State Assembly has passed similar legislation in an overwhelmingly bipartisan fashion while the State Senate is still yet to take action despite having bipartisan support in that chamber as well.

Some of our first responders have indi-

cated support for this concept as a result of how these chemicals can act as an accelerant in a fire that could be easily avoided. This law also protects businesses because it allows them to be more secure in knowing that the products that they are selling are safe.

This new law is a major help for parents, businesses, and first responders alike. ■

## Raising the Age for Tobacco Sales/E-Cigarette Legislation

This year I have introduced two bills aimed to protect the health of our communities. The first of these bills would raise the minimum age requirement for the purchase of cigarettes and tobacco products in Westchester County from 18 to 21.

New York City and Suffolk County have recently raised the age requirement to purchase tobacco and tobacco products to 21, and Nassau County raised the purchase age for tobacco products. There is compelling research that shows that delaying the start of use of tobacco products greatly diminished the length and severity of lifetime use, providing significant health benefits for

Westchester residents. Since Counties bear a significant portion of health care costs through Medicare and Medicaid, reducing smoking-related health issues provide financial benefits to county taxpayers.

The second law that I introduced, which passed with unanimous bi-partisan support and was signed by the County Executive, amends Westchester County Law to include all electronic or battery operated devices under the Westchester Smoke-Free Worksite Law. For over ten years, Westchester County has provided a safe work environment for its residents through the passage of the Smoke-Free Worksite Law, reinforcing what was done on a state level through the New York

Indoor Clean Air Act. This law eliminates the gray area that has been created since the introduction of electronic cigarettes. Electronic Cigarettes are battery operated devices which are used by heating nicotine "juice" inside the device, which turns into a vapor that is then inhaled and exhaled, similar to cigarettes. While many have used "e-cigarettes" as smoking cessation products, they are catching on among non-smokers and teens that are under the impression that they are a safe alternative to cigarettes.

Both of these proposed laws are common sense pieces of legislation which would help to protect all residents of Westchester County. Both raising the age and increasing the guidelines on "e-cigs" would potentially make a long term difference in our communities, ending the amount of children who begin to smoke in high school. ■

