

Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

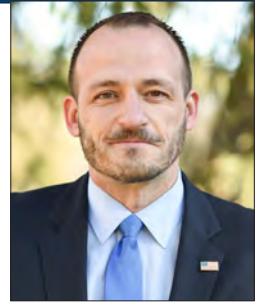
Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

2026 Midyear Update



Chairman Vedat Gashi

Legislator, District 4 ~ New Castle, Ossining, Somers, Yorktown



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As your District 4 County Legislator and Chairman of the Westchester County Board of Legislators, it is an honor to serve the residents of this extraordinary County. This past year, our Board remained focused on the issues that matter most to our communities—strengthening affordability, protecting our environment, advocating for utility rate relief, investing in infrastructure and public safety, and expanding opportunities for families and businesses. Working alongside the County Executive, my colleagues, local leaders, and community partners, I remain committed to thoughtful, responsive government that delivers meaningful results.

This newsletter highlights many of the initiatives, events, and partnerships that shaped the past year. Every accomplishment reflects the dedication of residents, volunteers, advocates, and public servants working together to make Westchester stronger, more resilient, and more inclusive.

Thank you for the trust you place in me and in the Board of Legislators. It is a privilege to serve you, and I look forward to continuing our work together to build an even brighter future for Westchester County.

Sincerely, *Vedat Gashi*

2026 LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

FIGHTING FOR AN AFFORDABLE WESTCHESTER

INVESTING IN CHILD CARE, HEALTH, AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES

The County's \$2.6 billion budget for 2026 provides critical support for Westchester residents through a broad range of social services, including childcare assistance, enhanced health programs, support for domestic violence survivors, and resources to address food insecurity. Affordable child care remains a central priority. As of May, the Child Care Scholarship Program has assisted 232 families and 301 children this year, helping parents work and pursue their education with greater stability and peace of mind.

STABILIZING HOUSING FOR RESIDENTS AND PREVENTING EVICTIONS

The Westchester County Office of Housing Counsel has become a critical lifeline for residents facing housing instability since it opened in July 2025. Since then,

the program has helped prevent 282 evictions and kept 369 households out of the shelter system. The office connects income-qualifying residents facing eviction to legal representation, trusted housing providers, and services, strengthening pathways to stable housing across the County. It was made possible by the Board's 2023 passage of the landmark *Access to Counsel Law*.

COMBATING RISING COSTS WITH PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

In May, the Board launched the Afford-



Introducing the Affordability and Economic Development Task Force

ability and Economic Development Task Force to address financial pressures facing Westchester residents and businesses through concrete policy recommendations. The task force brings together community, business, and nonprofit experts to identify cost-of-living drivers and strategies to strengthen small businesses and expand job creation in Westchester. Growing economic uncertainty at the federal level underscored the need for local action.

STANDING AGAINST UNAFFORDABLE UTILITY RATE HIKES

Westchester County continued to press the New York State Public Service Commission to reject proposed rate increases from Con Edison and New York State Electric and Gas. In partnership with the County Executive and state and local officials, the Board

continued inside...

advocated for residents, citing widespread alarm about soaring utility bills. The proposed increases exceed inflation and would add further financial pressure to households. This follows sustained advocacy in 2025 and 2026, which included a public input session in Somers that I chaired and legal participation in major New York State rate cases.

PUTTING WORKERS FIRST

OPENING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AND STRENGTHENING OUR WORKFORCE

Legislators unanimously passed a law in April creating a direct pathway for Westchester residents to enter skilled trade careers that offer higher wages, healthcare, and pensions. The *Mandating Apprenticeships in County Projects Law* requires contractors bidding on large County construction projects to offer New York State-registered apprenticeship programs in the building trades. Labor leaders praised the measure as a meaningful investment in workforce development. They called apprenticeships a proven route to the middle class that does not require a college degree.

ENSURING FAIR WAGES FOR ALL COUNTY CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

In May, the Board unanimously passed a measure guaranteeing that all workers on County construction projects receive stan-



Announcing passage of the Westchester County Lessor Prevailing Wage Act

dard union wages. The new law covers job sites on property Westchester County leases but does not own. Previously, a gap in state law left workers on those sites without fair wage protections, even when the work directly supported County operations. The *Westchester County Lessor Prevailing Wage Act* applies to long-term lease agreements and larger construction projects, requiring contractors and subcontractors to pay pre-

vailing wages. The Board and labor leaders called it a win for working families, making clear that County dollars should always uphold values of dignity and fair pay.

PROMOTING COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

STRENGTHENING FIREARM RISK

WARNINGS

The Board passed the *Visual Gun Warning Law*, requiring firearms retailers in Westchester County display images depict-



Announcing passage of the Visual Gun Warning Law

ing the risks of gun ownership alongside the written notices already mandated under a 2022 law. The labels must also be provided to anyone applying for a gun license in the County. Warnings highlight the increased risk of suicide, homicide, accidental death, and fatalities during domestic disputes that come with having a firearm in the home. They also include contact information for the County's Crisis Prevention and Response Team and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Visual images make the dangers of gun ownership harder to ignore and more likely to prompt safer decisions.

SUPPORTING SENIORS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Board funded the replacement of paratransit vehicles to ensure safe, reliable, and

accessible transportation for seniors and residents with disabilities. Additional state funding expands senior nutrition programs countywide. Together, these investments strengthen essential services that support health, mobility, and independence for older adults and residents with disabilities.

HONORING THE PAST, STANDING AGAINST HATE

This spring, I was honored to join Holocaust Remembrance and Human Rights observances across Westchester, including the countywide Yom HaShoah Commemoration in White Plains. Ceremonies were also held in Somers, Yorktown, and New Castle. Together, we remembered the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, heard powerful survivor testimony, and reaffirmed our shared responsibility to confront antisemitism, racism, and all forms of hate.



Yom HaShoah Commemoration

As Chairman of the Board of Legislators, I remain committed to ensuring Westchester is a place where everyone can live free from fear and discrimination. Through our Heritage Celebrations and our actions as elected leaders, we continue to honor the diverse communities that strengthen our county while standing united against hatred and intolerance. ■

KEEPING WESTCHESTER'S FINANCES STRONG

Westchester County again earned the highest-possible AAA bond ratings from S&P Global and Fitch Ratings. The continued confidence of these independent agencies, particularly in a challenging economic climate, reflects the Board's sound budgeting, healthy reserves, and effective long-term planning. This distinction keeps borrowing costs low and places Westchester among the highest-rated counties in the nation. ■

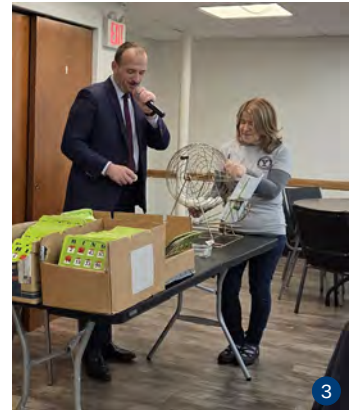
Around the District



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1. Announcing planned renovations to Westchester County Airport
2. Announcing our 2026 Westchester Regeneron STS scholars
3. Calling bingo with Yorktown seniors
4. Marching in the New Castle Memorial Day Parade
5. At the County "Salute to Seniors"
6. Speaking at the County Memorial Day service in Somers
7. Presenting a "big check" to assist My Brother Vinny, Inc. in Yorktown
8. Presenting a proclamation to Yorktown veteran Brian Sillik
9. At the Pride celebration flag-raising
10. Presenting citations to New Castle Police Department honorees



Chairman of the Board &
Westchester County Legislator

VEDAT GASHI

Proudly Serving the 4th District



800 Michaelian Office Building
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
White Plains, New York 10601
(Office) 914-995-2848
Gashi@westchesterlegislatorsNY.gov

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BUILDING ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM 2025

COMBATING AI-GENERATED DEEPFAKES: Passed a law prohibiting digitally deceptive AI-generated material used to harm, defraud, or exploit residents.

IMPROVING TRAFFIC STOP SAFETY: Launched the Blue Envelope Program countywide to improve interactions between law enforcement and drivers with autism and other disabilities during traffic stops.

PROTECTING CONSUMERS FROM SCAMS AND PREDATORS: Strengthened protections against deed theft, AI fraud, subscription traps, hidden fees, and data breaches through updated enforcement tools.

PREVENTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DEATHS: Established a countywide Domestic Violence High Risk Team to identify victims in extreme danger and coordinate life-saving interventions. I organized the first annual “Break the Cycle” Six-Mile Bike Run with the Pace Women’s Justice Center. Proceeds from the event support free legal services for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and elder abuse in Westchester County. The second annual Bike Run will take place on October 4, 2026.

ENSURING EQUAL CHANGING ACCESS FOR ALL FAMILIES (DIAPRS Act): Required diaper-changing stations in County parks and buildings to ensure equitable access for caregivers.

SAFEGUARDING FAMILIES THROUGH FASTER ALLERGY RESPONSE (GIOVANNI CIPRIANO ACT): Equipped County police with EpiPens and training to respond to severe allergic reactions and save lives.



“Break the Cycle” Bike Run to End Domestic Violence

**THE WORK CONTINUES! SEE HOW YOUR BOARD OF LEGISLATORS IS FIGHTING FOR
AFFORDABLE LIVING, WORKING FAMILIES, AND SAFER COMMUNITIES.**