



Legislative Report

Comprising the 2nd Legislative District:

Hempstead - Hicksville - Lakeview - New Cassel - Rockville Centre

Uniondale - Westbury - West Hempstead

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Volume XII

A message from Legislator Siela A. Bynoe



Dear Neighbor:

I would like to take a moment to provide updates on some important legislative and community initiatives in the Second Legislative District:

- ◆ At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, I **secured essential testing and healthcare services**, including dedicated testing facilities in Westbury and Hempstead (page 1);
- ◆ Amidst the national debate on police reform, I partnered with Legislator Lafazan to secure passage of legislation that will convene a committee tasked with **exploring alternative approaches for law enforcement intervention in mental health crisis calls** (page 3);
- ◆ I have renewed my advocacy for the use of **police officer body cameras** by Nassau County police officers (page 2);
- ◆ To promote transparency and accountability, Minority Leader Abrahams and I proposed the creation of a **police misconduct complaint hotline and website** (page 2);
- ◆ As we continue to re-evaluate our regional healthcare needs, I was named to the **NUMC Forward Task Force**, where I will work to shape and guide the future of Nassau County's **only public safety net hospital** (page 3);
- ◆ To protect our drinking water and promote conservation, I passed legislation that requires an **annual water quality report** by the Department of Health and launched a **Smart Sprinkler Reimbursement Program** (page 4); and
- ◆ Partnering with Minority Leader Abrahams, I passed legislation that **asserts the Legislature's ability to have final say on condemnation acquisitions** (page 3).

These are truly challenging times, and it is essential for our community to work together so that we may all create a brighter future. Now more than ever, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office with your questions, comments, and suggestions.

I wish you and your family continued good health in the days ahead.

Fighting Back Against COVID-19

Aggressive testing is a critical component of any successful strategy for combatting and controlling the spread of COVID-19.

Recognizing the urgent need for testing resources, especially in majority-minority communities, Legislator Bynoe forged a partnership between Nassau County and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) and secured commitments from County Executive Curran to fund and mobilize COVID testing at these facilities, including sites in Westbury and Hempstead. As a result, thousands have been tested for COVID-19 at these sites.

And, to address increased food insecurity during the pandemic, Legislator Bynoe secured commitments from the County to contract with Island Harvest to provide food and PPE to families in need. Through the efforts Legislator Bynoe spearheaded - including distributing food at COVID-19 testing sites more than 25,000 clients have received food.



In furtherance of this commitment, Legislator Bynoe recently voted to authorize a total of \$483,405 in funding to support the County's four FQHC-based COVID-19 testing sites.

“While it is undeniable that our region has made such great strides against COVID-19, we can only maintain our progress through vigilance. That is why I advocated so strongly to establish these testing sites within our communities and will fight to preserve these resources,” Legislator Bynoe said.

[County Waives Penalty for Late Property Tax Payments](#)

To assist residents facing financial hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic, Legislator Bynoe authored legislation that waives a \$210 penalty charged to Nassau residents who are late paying their property taxes.

Under her legislation, Nassau County will waive the collection of the listing fee tax penalty for Class One and Two Nassau County residential property owners for their 2020 tax bills. Because it must be paid in full to satisfy past-due taxes, an inability to pay the fee could expose already-overburdened taxpayers to escalating interest payments and penalties and even possible foreclosure.

Legislator Bynoe filed the proposal with the support of her Minority Legislature Caucus colleagues as co-sponsors and quickly gained the support of the Legislature's Majority caucus. Nassau County Executive Laura Curran signed the measure into law in time for the waiver to be in place before the due date for the first round of property tax payments.

"Taking this step to supplement state and federal pandemic relief efforts is both morally and economically sound," Legislator Bynoe said. "I am grateful to my colleagues in the Legislature and County Executive Curran for responding to the urgency of this need during the pandemic and acting swiftly to bring an additional measure of relief to Nassau County's most severely impacted homeowners."

[Renewed Advocacy for Police Officer Body Cameras](#)

The heinous killing of George Floyd was captured on video by a witness and corroborated by footage and audio from police officer body cameras. Disturbing video captured by those cameras chronicled the sequence of events that led to Mr. Floyd's death at the hands of police.



In 2014, Legislator Bynoe joined Minority Leader Abrahams and Legislator Solages to spearhead a Minority Caucus-led push to launch a pilot body camera program. While union officials did not dispute the merits of body cameras as a law enforcement tool, they argued successfully that their use must be approved through contract negotiations.

In the aftermath of George Floyd's horrific murder, Legislator Bynoe renewed her advocacy to secure an agreement during ongoing police union negotiations to deploy this proven technology in Nassau County.

In a May 29 letter to County Executive Curran, Legislator Bynoe stated that body cameras establish "an objective factual record that has become widely accepted as an essential tool in accurately evaluating" encounters between officers and civilians.

"Implementing the use of body camera technology would bring Nassau County in line with current best practices in law enforcement. I firmly believe the time to take this step is long overdue," Legislator Bynoe said.

[Establishing A Dedicated Third-Party Complaint Hotline](#)

To ensure Nassau County residents have streamlined and transparent platforms for filing complaints related to alleged police misconduct, Legislator Bynoe and Minority Leader Abrahams filed legislation that would authorize the creation of a 24-7 police complaint hotline and multi-lingual website. Those resources would be managed by an independent third-party vendor and include capabilities for uploading audio and video files.

The proposal would codify the following procedures:

- Every complaint will be assigned a case number and forwarded to the NCPD Commissioner and Deputy County Executive for Public Safety within two business days of receipt.
- Within five days of receipt, the NCPD will provide to the complainant the name and contact information for the investigator assigned to the case, who will be required to provide periodic updates.
- The police will furnish in writing the outcome to the complainant within five days of resolution and identify any resulting disciplinary procedures.
- The Legislature and County Executive will receive periodic reports summarizing complaints.
- Founded, substantiated complaints against officers will be publicly reported.

"By marrying the creation of these streamlined resources with enhanced standards of responsiveness, transparency and accountability, we have an opportunity to further refine Nassau County's law enforcement protocols in a manner that promotes equal justice and fairness for all," Legislator Bynoe said.

County Executive Curran recently signed into law a resolution, authored by Legislators Bynoe and Lafazan, that directs Nassau County to convene a committee tasked with studying alternative approaches to mental health responses and intervention by law enforcement.

Potential recommendations include, but are not limited to: creating a mental health unit within the Nassau County Police Department, establishing protocols for co-deploying mental and behavioral health professionals and non-law enforcement personnel to mental or behavioral health-related police calls, and conducting a nationwide review of best practices in alternative approaches to mental health crisis intervention.

“Disturbing video footage from a recent arrest in Far Rockaway and the fatal outcomes of police interventions in Oceanside and East Northport vividly illustrate why it is so important to ensure that we are taking every possible step to optimally equip Nassau County police officers to excel in their responses to mental health crisis calls,” Legislator Bynoe said. “I am grateful for the support of our colleagues for empowering stakeholders to engage with this essential issue.”



Legislature Asserts Final Say on Condemnation Acquisitions

Legislator Bynoe and Minority Leader Abrahams introduced and secured passage of a local law that gives the Legislature final say on how much the County pays when acquiring a parcel through eminent domain or condemnation.

In previous transactions, the Nassau County Charter granted the County Attorney the power to settle condemnation proceedings. That power included the ability to agree upon the amount of compensation to be paid to the owner of the condemned property.

The Legislature’s action follows Nassau County’s controversial move to sell the former Long Beach Motor Inn to a developer for \$1.15 million and abandon initial plans to build 90 units of affordable housing on the site. Instead, the project that was approved will yield only four to six affordable homes after the County paid \$3.6 million for the parcel following condemnation proceedings in 2017 under the Mangano administration.



Before the vote, Legislator Bynoe said, “What is our public policy as it relates to affordable housing? We state that we understand that we’re losing young people and families and seniors in droves... But we would take a piece of land that we own, that we purchased at an amount of [\$3.6] million, and utilize that same land to yield only four units of affordable housing?”

NUMC Forward Task Force

Legislator Bynoe will represent the Minority Legislative Caucus as a member of County Executive Curran’s “NUMC Forward” task force. The working group was formed to help shape and guide the future of Nassau County’s only public safety net hospital.

“For decades, NUMC has served as a critical link to health care for underserved and vulnerable communities, and its vital role in Nassau County’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic further illustrates its regional importance,” Legislator Bynoe said. “I am hopeful that the NUMC Forward task force will serve as a catalyst for devising and implementing long-term solutions for preserving this essential community health resource.”

The task force, whose members include union leaders, healthcare advocates and local community advocates in addition to County Executive Curran and legislative representatives, will advise NUMC management as long-term planning decisions related to the hospital and the A. Holly Patterson Extended Care Facility in Uniondale are formulated. The facilities currently employ more than 3,000 workers.

When announcing the task force, County Executive Curran said, “Our goal is to achieve a realignment of services to make NUMC more sustainable, without sacrificing critical patient care, so that it can continue serving its important function well into the future.”



Nassau County Legislator

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Prioritizing the Preservation of Public Drinking Water Supplies

Legislator Bynoe secured unanimous passage of her Ground Water and Public Water Supply Facts Report law, which requires the Nassau County Health Department to publish an annual report on the state of the public drinking water supply.

These annual reports, which will be published no later than July 31 of each year, will be based on data collected by water suppliers and derived from testing water for compliance. The report is intended to provide local governments with essential data for implementing long-term regional water quality preservation and improvement strategies and empower them to identify and address emerging contaminants.

To complement her Ground Water and Public Water Supply Facts Report Law, Legislator Bynoe drafted and secured unanimous passage of separate legislation creating the “Smart Sprinkler” Reimbursement Program, which entitles residents who utilize at least 15,000 gallons of water per month to partial reimbursement of the costs of installing a smart-sprinkler system. The reimbursement program does not apply to residents who are already eligible through their water supplier for financial assistance in purchasing smart sprinkler technology.

“At a moment when we are grappling with how to most effectively and efficiently remove contaminants such as 1, 4-dioxane from our drinking water, it is essential for local government to work in a coordinated manner to safeguard water resources,” Legislator Bynoe said. “These pieces of legislation will equip policymakers, advocates and residents with the tools and knowledge they need to protect and preserve our most precious natural resource.”

Giving Thanks To Essential Workers



With lights flashing, horns honking and hands waving, community organizations in dozens of decorated vehicles traveled the streets of Westbury and Lakeview to salute essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The automobile caravans, featuring local churches, sororities, youth organizations, local NAACP chapters and community members began as a celebration of Westbury’s essential workers in medicine, nursing, mental health care, food stores, law enforcement, public transportation, hospital administration and the court system and later expanded to honor frontline heroes in the hamlet of Lakeview.

“Through our ‘Thankful Tuesday’ and ‘Thankful Thursday’ caravans, we hope to express the profound and lasting appreciation for their courageous and selfless dedication to helping others, a sentiment that we will carry in our hearts with tremendous gratitude,” Legislator Bynoe said.

Legislator Bynoe would love to hear your comments. Please call her at (516) 571-6202 or email sbynoe@nassaucountyny.gov. For the latest news, you can also follow the Legislator on Facebook.