



Legislative Report

Comprising the 2nd Legislative District:

Hempstead – Hicksville – Lakeview – New Cassel – Rockville Centre

Uniondale – Westbury – West Hempstead

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Volume XIII

A message from Legislator Siela A. Bynoe



Dear Neighbor:

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

- On Memorial Day, I had the privilege of **presenting COVID-19 service bars** to the members and leaders of the Westbury Fire Department (page 1);
- Working with community leaders and trusted stakeholders, our office helped to **register more than 1,200 people to receive the COVID-19 vaccine** and addressed constituent needs throughout the public health crisis (page 2);
- After filing legislation in 2014 and subsequently dedicating more than seven years of advocacy to the issue, I am pleased that we are on track to launch a **police officer body camera program** (page 3);
- In addition to targeted community grants, I have worked to secure commitments that will set the stage for advancing more than **\$16.5 million in capital investments** across the Second Legislative District (page 3);
- I joined my colleagues in celebrating the renaming of Police Headquarters in honor of Westbury's **William J. Willett - the first African-American to serve as Nassau's Police Commissioner**; (page 4); and
- We mourned the passing of **Joysetta Pearce**, whose contributions to the chronicling and celebration of Black history in Nassau County and throughout our region will forever be cherished (page 4).

As we approach the final days of the pandemic, please continue to lift up in prayer everyone who has lost a friend or loved one to this terrible virus, and give thanks for the first responders, healthcare professionals, and essential frontline workers who continue to do so much for all of us. I wish you and your family continued good health in the days ahead.

Siela A. Bynoe

Recognizing Selfless Service During the COVID-19 Pandemic

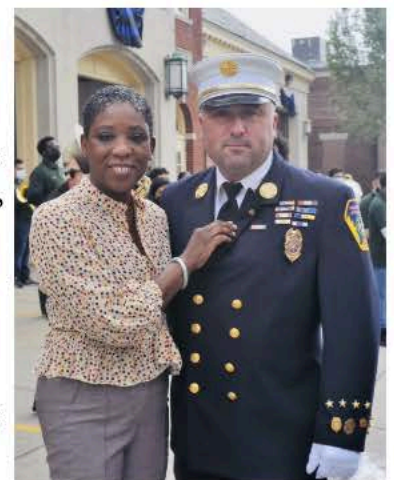
Legislator Bynoe recently spotlighted the Westbury Fire Department's courageous response to the pandemic by presenting its members with Nassau County COVID-19 service bars.

"When we were urged to shelter in place and stay home during the darkest days of the pandemic, the members of the Westbury Fire



Department were among the countless first responders throughout Nassau County that continued to place themselves in harm's way to save others," Legislator Bynoe said. "These COVID-19 service bars are but a small token of our deep and unwavering commitment to the individuals who embrace the spirit of volunteerism and selflessly dedicate themselves to serving and protecting their neighbors and their community."

In addition to expressing her gratitude to members for their efforts during the public health crisis, Legislator Bynoe thanked Department Chief Kenneth Gass, Jr. and volunteers for their response to a recent spate of fires in the community, including the historic May 6 blaze at Jamaica Ash's Westbury facility that contributed to the activation of all 71 of Nassau's volunteer fire departments.



Grassroots Approach Powers COVID-19 Response

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Legislator Bynoe’s district office became the first point of contact for residents seeking help with navigating the many challenges presented by the pandemic. Legislator Bynoe and her team are deeply grateful for the support and partnership of a constellation of not-for-profit agencies, community partners, and government colleagues that empowered her office to take a grassroots, hands-on approach to addressing constituent needs, especially in the earliest days of the public health emergency when demand was at its highest.



When vaccines first became available but were especially challenging to secure appointments for, Legislator Bynoe’s office fielded hundreds of constituent calls and spearheaded the creation of the County’s dedicated hotline (516-227-9590) to assist seniors with COVID-19 questions and vaccination appointments. This has been a useful tool for ensuring residents who have limited internet access, technological proficiency challenges, or disabilities that make use of an online registration portal impractical, can conveniently to schedule vaccine appointments.



As vaccine supplies increased, Legislator Bynoe partnered with civic associations, faith community leaders and partners in government to ensure equitable access to vaccinations. In particular, her partnerships with the many local churches in the Second Legislative District helped to register more than 700 community members for appointments to date. In Hempstead and Westbury, Legislator Bynoe went door-to-door with a multilingual team of volunteers and community stakeholders, including Hempstead Police Department officers and retired Westbury School District officials, to sign residents up for shots. This grassroots approach has paid dividends, especially in connecting with hard-to-reach populations and in communities of color that were most vulnerable to the ravages of COVID-19 due to comorbidities and systemic disparities in healthcare access.

One such effort this spring, completed in partnership with New York State Senator Anna Kaplan; North Hempstead Councilwoman Viviana Russell; Westbury School Board trustees; leaders of the Westbury Teachers’ Association; spiritual and community leaders; and Westbury student volunteers, culminated with a pop-up clinic at Westbury’s Park Avenue Elementary School, in which 62 percent of the 500 vaccine recipients were non-English speaking individuals.



County Launches One-Stop Shop for COVID-19 Relief Aid

Nassau County has launched a new hub for information about federal, state, county and local COVID-19 relief resources. Through its brick-and-mortar location at Eisenhower Park and website, the Boost Nassau Resource Center is designed to serve as a one-stop shop for residents and business owners seeking to determine their eligibility and apply for an array of COVID-19 relief resources such as small business grants, low-interest loans, rental assistance, and more. Visit <https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/boostnassau> to learn more.

BOOST NASSAU RECOVERY RESOURCES



Police Reform Update: Body Cameras, Crisis Calls and Third-Party Oversight

After filing legislation in 2014 and subsequently dedicating more than seven years of advocacy to the issue, Legislator Bynoe is pleased to report that Nassau County is on a positive trajectory toward the implementation of an officer-worn body camera program, which would bring this best practice in law enforcement to the nation's 13th largest police force for the first time. Renewed advocacy for body cameras in Nassau followed the May 25, 2020 police-involved murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minn. - an incident that generated international outrage and sparked passionate demands for increased police oversight and accountability.



Legislator Bynoe is also gratified the County's police reform plan embraces a more holistic approach to mental health crisis calls by expanding the use of its Mobile Crisis Unit. This change was the outgrowth of findings contained in a study completed under the auspices of a law Legislator Bynoe co-introduced and for which she secured unanimous approval last summer.

With those improvements secured, Legislator Bynoe is continuing her quest to secure additional reforms that will protect the interests of residents, taxpayers and officers alike. These including the creation of a third-party entity to oversee officer conduct and the implementation of a non-punitive Early Intervention System (EIS) and to aid in the proactive monitoring of officer performance and wellness.

Newsday's recent 'Cameras and Consequences' exposé vividly illustrated the need of comprehensive reform in its chronicling of the case of Bobby Hayes, who was 'shackled and jailed for a week' in 2014 after being arrested based upon a false police report filed by officers with lengthy disciplinary records. After the claims were disproven by a civilian's video, Hayes sued the County and was paid a six-figure settlement - one of many costly police misconduct-related settlements Legislator Bynoe scrutinizes in her role as a member of the Legislature's Rules committee.

"We have also learned of allegations of misconduct as fiduciaries for the county," Legislator Bynoe said in a recent interview with Blank Slate Media related to third-party oversight needs. "As we settle lawsuits, it has become clear to us that we need to have the most resourced and independent review process employed."

Investing in the Future of the Second Legislative District

Legislator Bynoe's advocacy ahead of the adoption of Nassau County's 2021 Capital Improvement Plan yielded commitments that will set the stage for advancing more than \$16.5 million in infrastructure investments in the Second Legislative District upon their completion.

In Hempstead Village, capital investments include funds to set into motion the design phases for the Washington and Franklin Avenue streetscapes - projects that will yield a \$6 million infrastructure upgrade. Furthermore, the County will dedicate an additional \$1 million toward the Joysetta & Julius Pearse African-American Museum of Nassau County over the next four years. Lakeview's Woodfield Road streetscape is also receiving funding toward the design phase of a \$1 million project.



Legislator Bynoe additionally secured new bond approvals for improvements to Union Avenue between School Street to Brush Hollow Road and from the crosswalk near the railroad to School Street, and improvements on Maple Avenue from Union Avenue to Post Avenue. Upon their completion, these streetscapes will reflect an \$8.5-million investment in Westbury's revitalization.

Targeted investments through the County's Community Revitalization Grant (CRP) program include:

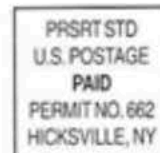
- \$150,000 for Lincoln Park splash pad and pool renovations (Village of Hempstead)
- \$99,400 for law enforcement equipment (Hempstead Police Department)
- \$50,000 for LED street lighting (Village of Westbury)
- \$50,000 for Jaws of Life, Gas Detection Device & Fire Hose (Westbury Water & Fire District)
- \$50,000 for archival systems (Westbury Public Library)
- \$40,000 for Jaws of Life equipment (Lakeview Fire District)

Nassau County Legislator

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Remembering Mrs. Joysetta Pearse: Nassau's Matriarch of Black History



Legislator Bynoe and all of Nassau County mourn the recent passing of Mrs. Joysetta Pearse, whose leadership in the realms of cultural enrichment, history education and genealogical research made an indelible mark on the community.

Earlier this spring, the Hempstead-based African-American Museum of Nassau County was renamed in recognition of Mr. and Mrs. Pearse's dedication to the preservation and promotion of the rich history of African American art, music, culture, and traditions - a celebration Legislator Bynoe had the honor of joining.

"I consider her to be the matriarch of the history of Nassau County," Legislator Bynoe said in leading a June 14 moment of silence on the floor of the Legislature. "That museum is one of the only African American museums on the eastern seaboard. She curated art in that space, but more importantly, she gave her full heart to that museum."

Celebrating Commissioner Willett

Legislator Bynoe proudly joined members of the Willett family, Nassau County PD officials and her colleagues in government to officially rename police headquarters in celebration of trailblazing former Commissioner William J. Willett.

The honor was bestowed in recognition of the sterling legacy of service that Commissioner Willett, a long-time pillar of the Westbury community, earned in his nearly 50-year career in law enforcement - a track record he established while breaking barriers as he rose through the ranks. In 2000, he reached the pinnacle of the department, becoming the first African-American to serve as the Nassau Police Department's Commissioner. Commissioner Willett passed away in 2002 after a brief illness.



In remarks during the ceremony, Legislator Bynoe remembered Commissioner Willett as a man who "stood for all that embodies the noble work of policing and law enforcement" and reflected upon how he served as an inspiration for other black law enforcement professionals as they rose through the ranks. She also expressed gratitude for the spirit of service he instilled in his entire family - values that positively impacted the world far beyond Westbury.

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.