



Westchester
County Association

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For Immediate Release

Members of Area's Leading Business Advocacy Group Express Strong Dissatisfaction with NY State Legislators at Annual Breakfast

Results of Survey and Q&A Point To Sharp Divide Between Business Community and Lawmakers over Spending and Taxes

WCA President Bill Mooney Say It's Time for Legislature To Restructure, Cut Expenses and Perhaps Shrink Itself

White Plains, NY (**March 13, 2009**) – Members of the Westchester County Association (WCA)—the area's leading business advocacy group—today expressed strong dissatisfaction with New York State legislators representing Westchester and the region over taxes and spending. The exchange of views occurred at the WCA's Annual Breakfast held in Tarrytown.

A record turnout of more than 300 WCA members and community leaders packed the room. The results of a survey taken by more than 200 WCA members last week were shared with the legislators.

Among the striking results was **78%** of the members surveyed feel that the state is **not** taking the necessary actions to control spending.

During a lengthy question and answer session, sharp differences between the legislators and many WCA members became clear.

WCA President William M. Mooney, Jr., said: "Today's exchange showed there is a significant disconnect between our legislators and the business community. At a time when businesses and organizations are struggling to survive by cutting expenses and restructuring, the only place this has not happened with the state government. This is an appropriate time for the legislature to join in a long overdue effort to restructure, cut expenses and maybe shrink itself."

The results of the member survey, which were shared with the legislators, were:

Do you feel the State is taking the necessary actions to control spending?

78% No 14% Yes 8% Don't Know

Do you feel that providing federal stimulus dollars to local municipalities and school districts eliminates their incentive to control costs?

Yes 47% No 50% Don't Know 3%

Are you in favor of consolidation of municipalities to control costs?

85% yes 9% No 6% Don't Know

Are you in favor of consolidation of school districts to control costs?

Yes 71% No 19% Don't Know 10%

Are you in favor of the MTA's proposal to reduce its deficit by levying a payroll tax of .33% on employers in the MTA region?

Yes 13% No 74% Don't know 13%

Do you feel that NY State should keep its Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) at the current level?

Yes 37% No 19% Don't Know 44%

As part of the survey, members were also asked to share additional comments. Highlights:

“Reduce State payroll. Reduce unfunded mandates. Eliminate the sweetheart state pension system Change teacher tenure practice to include merit increases based on individual performance.”

“Every industry, and every family in this country is losing money. It’s time to hold people responsible for their spending. From school budgets to Union Labor Agreements, everyone must be cut because already so many of us have.”

“End the bickering and fighting over "pork" and return this State to a leadership position nationally. They are doing nothing except protecting their special interests and taxing business and citizens to a certain exodus to other states.”

“Continue focus on cutting spending.”

“We are in a new age, and let's take this opportunity to break apart the system of entitlement of state employees, and our citizens, and rebuild it to make it run like a lean company. Outsource as many seasonal jobs to the private sector as possible; it's being done in other states.”

A copy of the complete survey and WCA members’ comments is attached.

The Westchester County Association (www.westchester.org) is the preeminent business membership organization in Westchester County. The Association is committed to business advocacy, economic vitality and to providing a strong and clear voice for the interests of businesses on the regional, national and international levels. Its key objectives are: promoting positive economic development in the region; fostering business development; and providing its members with access and interaction with key public and private sector individuals, agencies and organizations