



April 19, 2009

Group has taken action on reforms

An April 7 letter to the editor accused our organization of not taking a leadership role in recommending practical reforms. Nothing could be further from the truth. Over the past year, our Property Tax Reform Alliance has made numerous reform recommendations for all levels of government including consolidating services, creating a new "Tier V" pension plan, restructuring public sector health-care benefits. These recommendations have been lauded by the news media.

As the area's leading business advocacy and membership group, The Westchester County Association continues its fight for the government reforms we feel are needed to keep our community economically viable. We are pressing these issues following the failure of the state Legislature to make meaningful reforms prior to adopting the 2009-2010 budget earlier this month. We believe that the proposed increases of more than \$7 billion in personal income taxes and other taxes, combined with the elimination of the STAR property tax rebate, will be very painful for both businesses and individuals and only makes our area less competitive.

Several hundred members have already signed our petition expressing deep disappointment with the current budget, and have offered an unprecedented number of comments about the disconnect between our elected officials and the business community. We urge others to sign at www.westchester.org.

We have shared the petition comments with our state legislators, and we call upon them to lead the way in overhauling the structure of state government and initiating fiscal reforms, just as businesses and families have done to survive the economic crisis.

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