



CONTACT: Dorothy Forcina  
The Westchester County Association, Inc.  
(914) 948-6444  
dforcina@westchester.org

## **WESTCHESTER COUNTY ASSOCIATION SAYS PROPOSAL BY LEGISLATOR BILL RYAN TO CREATE CITIZENS BUDGET COMMITTEE IS IMPRACTICAL AND WILL ONLY DELAY REFORM OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

**White Plains, NY (December 16, 2009)** -- It seems that with each passing day another budget cutting or consolidation plan is issued by a different legislator. Ironically, based on past behavior and actions, few if any of those making the proposals had ever indicated any interest in budget cutting prior to last month's defeat of Andy Spano by Rob Astorino. It's not a coincidence that the legislators' sudden interest in budget and tax cutting began when the incoming county executive was elected on a platform of cutting taxes and reducing the size of county government.

The latest concept to be put forth came today from Board Chairman Bill Ryan. It calls for the appointment of a 31-member citizen's advisory group that is going to spend the better part of the next two years studying ways in which consolidation of services can be achieved in Westchester. Ryan says the group would make recommendations sometime in 2011. Unfortunately, this proposal smacks of a partisan political maneuver to try to outflank other legislators and Astorino. This plan would encumber the new county executive and is simply a delaying tactic.

The Westchester County Association believes Ryan's approach is grossly impractical for a myriad of reasons. Practical approaches should be put into action within a matter of months not years. You don't need a large and unwieldy committee to study taking actions that are already being laid out.

Controlling spending by the county government begins at home. The legislature has been notorious in acquiescing to an expanded and ever-more-costly county government. The Ryan plan is yet another costly expense and adds to the already top-heavy bureaucracy. If the legislators truly have found religion and want to cut spending, duplication of services and waste, they know full-well where to look. Various spending-reduction proposals are already in play. And it is fully expected that incoming County Executive Rob Astorino will begin implementing significant consolidations, efficiencies and cost saving measures very soon after taking office on January 1.

Which brings us back to today's proposal by Board Chairman Ryan. Clearly Mr. Ryan is very late to board the cost-cutting train. His tenure as chairman has been marked by excessive spending including major renovations to the legislature's own floor of office and expanding its staff. While he may now possibly be seeing the light, creating a committee to study the topic over two years is not a viable approach.

The Westchester County Association continues to call for the legislature to move forward quickly in meaningful budget and tax reduction plan and to work cooperatively with the incoming county executive to have a truly bi-partisan approach to reducing the cost of county government. The taxpayers and the businesses of Westchester expect and deserve nothing less.

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