



# Legislative Report

Comprising the 2nd Legislative District:  
Hempstead • Hicksville • Lakeview • New Cassel • Rockville Centre  
Uniondale • Westbury • West Hempstead

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## A message from **Legislator Siela A. Bynoe**



As your legislator, my focus continues to be enhancing the quality of life for residents. Following are some of the projects I have initiated or with which I have been involved:

- **Challenging Tax Assessments** - I communicated with residents to urge them to file tax grievances, contributing to an increase of grievances filed, with over 75% of filers

receiving reductions (*See p. 1*);

- **Helping women-, minority- and veteran- owned businesses** - I introduced a bill that will make it easier for these important businesspeople to obtain County contracts (*See p. 1*);

- **Step Up!** - I collaborated with Bridge to Promise to help make Step Up!, a college readiness initiative, more effective (*See p. 2*);

- **\$1.2 Million For Land Bank** - The Nassau County Land Bank, which I helped create, received a \$1.2 million grant to rehabilitate "zombie" homes (*See p. 2*);

- **Rent Stabilization Hearing** - I testified on behalf of tenants at a hearing of the Rent Stabilization Board to advocate for a zero percent increase. As a result, this year for the first time, there was no increase in 1 or 2 year leases in rent-stabilized buildings in the County (*See p. 2*);

- **Emergency Generators** - Passage of this bill will require landlords of certain multi-family buildings to install generators to keep elevators working during power outages (*See p. 3*);

- **Youth Job Fair** - Helped many teens find rewarding summer and after school jobs (*See p. 3*);

- **NICE Audit** - An audit of the NICE bus transportation contractor was approved following a letter I sent to the County Comptroller questioning the contractor's financial statements (*See p. 3*);

- **Raise the Age Taskforce** - I authored a letter to the County Executive pushing for the creation of a taskforce to ensure a new law passed by New York State that raises the minimum age for being tried as an adult from 16 to 18 is properly implemented (*See p. 4*).

*My staff and I look forward to continuing to serve you.*

## Challenging Tax Assessments Is Easy And Pays Off

A report released early this year by Newsday showed the greatest percentage of homeowners who hadn't previously filed grievances is in minority areas. Although Siela had already held three tax assessment workshops, when she learned of the disparity, she sent a letter to residents explaining the issue and advising them how to file. As a result of this and the overall publicity about the ease of filing, the number of homeowners in minority areas, disabled residents and low- and middle-income senior citizens who filed for the first time in 2017 greatly increased.

This year, partially as a result of this initiative, Nassau County received a record number of property tax assessment grievances. One likely reason is because homeowners are realizing how much more they're paying than some of their neighbors who do file and that filing themselves is easy. Over 75% of homeowners who file are awarded decreases in their assessed bills.

Note that tax assessment challenges can only be filed between January and March for the following year's taxes. To file or learn about appeals, visit [nassaucountyny.gov](http://nassaucountyny.gov). In the links across the top, click on Nassau A-Z, then on Assessment Review Commission or call the Commission at 516-571-3214. Legislator Bynoe will sponsor tax workshops early next year. All of her constituents will receive mailings about the event dates and locations.

### Introduced Bond Assistance Program

Legislator Siela Bynoe introduced legislation with her co-sponsors that will create a Bond Assistance Program. This program is focused on helping minority-, women- and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses secure more County contracts.

Millions of dollars in County projects are contracted each year. Yet, for smaller businesses, working through the bonding requirement process required to secure these contracts can be very time-consuming.

The program will provide assistance in satisfying bonding requirements that are needed for many County procurement contracts.



## Step Up! Challenges Students

Step Up! is a college readiness initiative birthed out of Legislator Bynoe's desire to see young adult mentors encourage young people to prepare for the workforce. Legislator Bynoe launched the program for a second year in partnership with Bridge to Promise to help young adult leaders spark inspiration in high school sophomores and juniors to pursue a college education. The teams of enthusiastic millennials share information on the college process, advise students about various career paths and what they need to do to achieve their goals in high school and for college applications.

These young entrepreneurs, executives and educators share the visions they created from their own lives, using their own professional success as examples of what the high school students can also achieve.

Siela feels that a big part of the program's success is based on these young mentors to whom the high school students more easily relate. The two-hour interactive programs take place several times a year. Contact Legislator Bynoe's office for details on this program, including upcoming programs scheduled.

## \$1.2 Million Secured For Land Bank To Rebuild Our Neighborhoods

The Nassau County Land Bank was formed in 2015 after Legislator Bynoe introduced legislation to start a land bank, a non-profit corporation organized to buy, restore and market abandoned properties. The Land Bank immediately applied for New York State funding to begin buying and converting "zombie" homes into attractive, sellable homes. In May of this year, New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman announced that \$1.2 million of the \$20.9 million in statewide land bank grants is coming to Nassau.

The Nassau County Land Bank's mission is to renovate the homes and put them on the market at fair prices making home ownership a real possibility, not just a dream. Siela serves as a Director on the Land Bank's Board, which enables her to closely manage the program.

## Rent Stabilization Hearing A Success

Legislator Siela Bynoe is so pleased to share the exciting news that, for the first time in the history of the Nassau County Rent Guidelines Board, a zero percent rent increase on leases of one or two years in rent-stabilized buildings was approved.

During the hearing, Legislator Bynoe addressed the Rent Guidelines Board to advocate for the zero rent increase. She also cited the need for repairs in many housing units, especially in Hempstead.

Siela has been a housing advocate for over 15 years and considers it her mission to represent the voices of residents in the communities she serves. She will continue to stress the fact that raising rents, especially during difficult economic times, is wrong. Please contact Legislator Bynoe's office at 516-571-6202 if your landlord tries to charge a rental increase, which is a violation.



## Westbury Dragons - 2017 LI Champs!

Legislator Siela Bynoe was very proud to cheer on Westbury High School's Boys Basketball team during their winning season. Having just moved up from A to AA league this year, winning this year's Long Island Championship was especially impressive. Siela attended both the Long Island Championships in Stony Brook as well as the New York State Championship in Binghamton this past spring.

Legislator Bynoe invited the entire team to a special ceremony at the County Legislature to celebrate the boys' success. She also attended a special dinner in the boys' honor.

## Youth Job Fair Held At Roosevelt Field

Legislator Siela Bynoe partnered with Simon Malls for a first-of-its-kind Youth Job Fair. Held at Roosevelt Field in May, many of the Mall's retailers participated. The high school students who attended the Job Fair seeking summer and/or after-school employment submitted applications for the hundreds of available positions.

Siela was grateful for the assistance of Nassau BOCES Work-Based Learning Coordinator Amy Belfiore. Amy's interview expertise, technical assistance and other help was invaluable.

Legislator Bynoe feels strongly that opportunities like these can help foster strong work ethic for young people, as well as provide a valuable service for the employer.

## Trailblazer Helen Wilson Honored

Legislator Bynoe was proud to select Ms. Helen Wilson as a Nassau County Legislature 2017 Women Trailblazer honoree in March. A 95-year-old Hempstead resident who has been active in her community for decades, Ms. Wilson was eager to serve her country.

After trying to enlist in the Army when she was only 17, she returned to enlist as soon as she turned 18, starting the long lineage of service as the first of her six siblings to serve in the military.



One of her first assignments in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) was to care for soldiers returning from battle during World War II. While serving, Ms. Wilson was chosen to compete against female students at Tuskegee University and earned the opportunity to train with the Tuskegee Airmen.

After leaving the Army, Ms. Wilson worked for over 50 years in accounting and bookkeeping for Queens Hospital. Siela also selected Ms. Wilson to honor for Black History Month this past February.

## Fighting For Emergency Generators

Last year, Legislator Bynoe introduced a bill that would require landlords of multi-family dwellings designated to serve seniors and the disabled, our most vulnerable populations, to install generators to provide electricity to elevators when there is an interruption in the electrical power.

The Legislative Majority has not yet called the legislation, so Legislator Bynoe re-introduced it this past spring under the Human Rights law. Once adopted, this legislation will help to protect the health, safety and welfare of residents during power outages. Just as important, it will allow them to safely evacuate a building and/or receive medical attention, if necessary.

If you are concerned about the welfare of vulnerable residents in your neighborhood, call Legislator Norma Gonsalves at 516-571-6213 and urge her to call the bill at the Legislature.

## Call For Audit Of NICE Bus Service Contract

Earlier this year, Legislator Siela Bynoe sent a letter to the Nassau County Comptroller requesting an audit of the County's contract with Transdev, the parent company of NICE, the Nassau Inter-County Express that provides bus service throughout the County.

Siela expressed concern over whether NICE is operating in the best interest of County residents. NICE claims to be operating at a deficit, but showed a profit of \$4.6 million in 2015. They cut service on some routes citing the deficit as a reason.

The Comptroller recently confirmed that the audit is scheduled to begin. Rest assured that Legislator Bynoe will stay on top of this critical issue and will share progress with her constituents.



## Celebrating Achievements Throughout District 2



Malverne Career Day at  
Howard T. Herbert Middle School



Siela Co-Hosts Haitian  
Flag Day Celebration



Hempstead Community  
Block Party and Health Fair



Women's History Month



Westbury Senior Citizens Luncheon and Officers Installation



NUMC Mammovan at Kennedy Park



Lakeview FD commission of new fire engine

## Nassau County Needs A Raise The Age Taskforce

In April, New York State passed legislation that raises the minimum age for being tried as an adult from 16 to 18 years old. A record sealing request for minors under 18 for certain offenses and other provisions of this new law will begin being phased in this October. Detention of juveniles in the County jail will be phased out and adolescent offenders will be secured in special facilities.

In a letter to the County Executive, Legislator Siela Bynoe strongly urged that a bipartisan Raise the Age taskforce be established.

The first order of business for this taskforce is to create a compre-

hensive implementation plan for these new requirements so that its introduction is well planned and addresses the full intent of the law. She suggested that the Taskforce include representatives from relevant Nassau County departments.

Legislator Bynoe also recommended that the taskforce compile a list of contracts the County has with social service organizations that provide programs for juveniles and other possible at-risk youth.

The legislation also keeps young offenders out of the court system. Instead of court appearances, they meet with court representatives.

In order for this procedure to function properly and accomplish its purpose to rehabilitate youth offenders, County departments involved need to be properly trained, staffed and prepared. In addition, a comprehensive plan needs to be developed and implemented so the juvenile detention center also follows the new law. Rehabilitating young offenders will make them far less likely to commit another crime after being released.

Legislator Bynoe will continue to stay on top of this situation and keep constituents apprised of its progress.