

# The Business Council of Westchester

## 2018 Legislative Agenda

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Dr. Marsha Gordon, *President/CEO*

George Lence, *Vice Chair Governmental Action*

John Ravitz, *Executive Vice President/COO*



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Thomas DiNapoli, *Comptroller*

Eric T. Schneiderman, *Attorney General*

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35<sup>th</sup> S.D. Andrea Stewart-Cousins

36<sup>th</sup> S.D. Jamaal Bailey

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40<sup>th</sup> S.D. Terrence Murphy

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91<sup>st</sup> A.D. Steve Otis

92<sup>nd</sup> A.D. Thomas J. Abinanti

93<sup>rd</sup> A.D. David Buchwald

94<sup>th</sup> A.D. Kevin Byrne

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Timothy Idoni, County Clerk

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*The BCW's top priority is to foster create economic development for all in Westchester County and the Hudson Valley.*

## 2018 Overview

The Business Council of Westchester (BCW) is the county's premier business membership organization. The BCW's top priority is to foster economic development for all in Westchester County and the Hudson Valley.

The BCW represents over 1,000 members ranging in size from multinational corporations, leading global bio-tech companies, professional service firms, hospitals and universities, mid-size businesses, not-for profit organizations and small business owners in every sector of the county's diverse community.

The members represent over 200,000 employees in Westchester County and beyond. Most importantly the members continue to help drive the county's economy in creating economic growth and jobs. The BCW is proud of its open, inclusive and collaborative culture which is fostered through the involvement of its members and the strong leadership and dedication of its Board of Directors. Many of the BCW's members conduct business on a regional, state-wide, national and international level, which has served to create opportunities for business growth in Westchester and the Hudson Valley.

The BCW is a private not-for-profit corporation funded by annual investments by its members.



*The 2017 Government Action Council Albany Lobby Day included a meeting with NYS's Senate Democratic Leader Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins and former State Senator and now County Executive George Latimer.*

# Government Action Council

## Improved Business Climate

The mission of the BCW's Government Action Council is to provide leadership in public policy and involve our members in helping to advocate for economic opportunity in Westchester County and the Hudson Valley.

To accomplish this, the BCW's Government Action Council will:

- Educate and inform the business community about relevant county, state and federal policy issues.
- Review county, state and federal legislation and regulations to assess potential impacts on the business community.
- Influence public policy outcomes through advocacy when the business community's interest may be affected.
- Serve as an information resource and clearinghouse for the business community and governmental leaders.
- Leverage public policy issues and legislation to promote business growth and create a more competitive business environment.
- Look beyond the borders of Westchester County and the Hudson Valley to address issues impacting the business community.

**UPPER RIGHT** *Westchester County Board of Legislator's Chair Benjamin Boykin addresses BCW members at the Annual BCW County Board of Legislator's reception.*

**BELOW** *Westchester County Executive George Latimer presented his new administration's economic development priorities at the BCW's KeyBank Breakfast Leadership Series.*

*The BCW serves as an information resource and clearinghouse for the business community and governmental leaders.*





## **The important role The Business Council of Westchester's Legislative Agenda performs**

Every year, legislative bills that are passed or not passed in local, state and federal legislatures have a powerful impact on the Westchester business community's ability to serve its stakeholders. Business leaders, whether they represent large, medium or small sized communities owe it to themselves, their employees and their shareholders (if they work for a publicly traded company), to offer their opinion and expertise on important policy issues.

In order to address this critical responsibility the BCW's Government Action Council creates a Legislative Agenda each year. All BCW members are encouraged to contribute their suggestions and expertise in this process. The BCW also works with local, state and federal elected officials to convert legislative goals into reality. Included in this overall effort is the BCW's annual Albany Lobby Day which is held during the state's legislative session. The Government Action Council also meets on a regular basis with local, state and federal elected officials and agency representatives to ensure that positions on legislation and regulatory matters are addressed in a timely manner. Every year the work of the BCW's Legislative Agenda promotes pro-business recommendations that help Westchester and the



Hudson Valley's economy. Every Westchester County elected official will receive a copy of the BCW's 2018 Legislative Agenda.

## **Current Challenges and Priorities**

In 2018, Government at all levels will face many challenges that our elected officials will be working on. The BCW will continue to call for fundamental reforms in the way that our county, state and federal governments conduct business. The BCW will urge our elected officials to adopt policies that lead to sustainable economic growth that will create new jobs in all business sectors.

The BCW looks forward to continuing meaningful discussions with our county, state and federal elected officials on numerous issues to ensure that the collective voice of the county's business community is heard.

*The BCW will continue to advocate for strong structural reforms that are important to strengthening the county's long-term financial condition.*

## Remaining Fiscally Responsible

In 2018, the BCW looks forward to working with Westchester County's new County Executive, George Latimer and the new leadership on the County Board of Legislators. In December of 2017, the Board of Legislators voted and approved a budget that for the first time in eight years raised the County's tax levy. In 2018, the BCW will urge the County Executive and the Board of Legislators to pass an on-time budget that does not raise taxes or include any fiscal gimmicks. The "nuts and bolts" of the County's budget needs to send a strong message to the business community that the County's fiscal house is in order and will protect the County's bond rating, which is critical to attracting and retaining employers in Westchester County. The County Executive and the Board of Legislators need to send a strong message that the County is focused on creating an environment where businesses can grow and prosper.

The BCW also urges the County Executive and the Board of Legislators to promote and adopt smart private-public partnerships that will create solid opportunities for real economic growth. The BCW continues to support the proposed public-private partnership for Westchester County Airport. By moving forward in a responsible manner with this project, Westchester's County government would become a model for local municipalities across the country.

There is still much work that can and needs to be done to help improve the County's fiscal matters. The BCW will continue to advocate for strong structural reforms that are important to strengthening the County's long-term financial condition. This will require continuing to identify recurring benefits and savings and concessions from labor unions in future contract negotiations. The County must also treat its reserve funds judiciously and make real efforts to **consolidate** services between local governments.

The BCW continues to support the important work of the County's Local Development Corporation, which has helped small businesses and not-for-profits to receive funding and helped generate new programs and jobs.



## Workforce Development

The BCW continues to stand committed in its efforts to provide the Westchester business community with a prepared and skilled future workforce. Working through partnerships and collaboration with the Westchester-Putnam Development Board and local-youth organizations, the BCW provides opportunities to connect local youth with the tangible skills necessary for being productive in the workforce.

For the past eight years, the BCW has coordinated successful youth workforce initiatives that have provided a proven winning solution for both businesses and the County's youth. By supplying the business community with a pipeline of work-ready young adults, these efforts have helped to streamline recruitment providing employers with access to untapped talent. Annually, the BCW's Private Sector Summer

Employment Initiative seeks to connect 225 young adults between the ages of 18-24 in summer jobs. Through strong connections with the business community and working with our partnership youth organizations, this program has proved to be successful in placing young adults in summer jobs since its inception. The Private Sector Summer Employment Initiative has served as a tremendous resource to local businesses by providing them with motivated, talented and eager young adults to employ. The BCW will continue to serve as the bridge between the new generation of workers and the business community; helping to ensure that our future workforce remains in Westchester County.

It is important to note that the BCW works directly with employers and job seekers to ensure that the County's youth who are participating in the Workforce Development Academy

**LEFT** BCW Board Member Joseph Markey, KeyBank; County Executive George Latimer; BCW President & CEO Marsha Gordon; BCW Chairman of the Board Anthony Justic

**BELOW** BCW President & CEO Marsha Gordon interviews Sergio Fuster, President of USA Yogurt, DanoneWave at the People United Bank's BCW Leadership Conversations Series.



## County *(continued)*

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for Youth (WDAY) have access to a variety of meaningful work experiences as required under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Work experiences include summer and year-round employment opportunities, mentoring, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships, job shadowing and on-the-job-training.

In 2017, the BCW held the 6th Annual Youth Summit entitled “Map Out a Career Pathway That Can Really Take You Somewhere”. The theme was designed to provide the 200 young adults in attendance with applicable knowledge to help them discover their self-strengths and to introduce and connect them to the different thriving career sectors in our region. The Youth Summit participants worked with business representatives who served as facilitators, as well as their peers, on interactive team building activities. In addition, participants explored career pathways, interviewing skills and gained professional work strength assessments.

### **Green Business Partnership**

The Green Business Partnership (GBP) was founded in 2009 as the Westchester Green Business Challenge, a program of the BCW in partnership with Westchester County and Green Team Spirit LLC. In 2014, the program expanded to offer an official green business certification available to organizations that complete a rigorous and rewarding process to reduce environmental impact. With nearly 100 active members, the GBP provides a solution to organizations that want to go green but lack the time and expertise to incorporate sustainability into their core mission. Unlike other programs, the GBP is holistic and focuses on all areas of environmental sustainability, including organizational commitment, energy, materials management, transportation, land use and water. Responding to widespread demand for access to the GBP's propriety tools and turnkey system, the program was rebranded as the Green Business Partnership in 2017 and made available statewide. The Green Business Partnership has been honored twice by the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV) and was awarded the 2017 Outstanding Nonprofit Award by 914 Inc. Magazine. Con Edison, NYSERDA and Westchester Community Foundation are Platinum Sponsors.





Highlights from the past year include:

- **Expanded Internship Program:** The Green Business Partnership has partnered with the Greenburgh Nature Center to create the Green Business Internship & Training Program, a new initiative designed to provide additional support to members in their efforts to achieve green business certification. To date, 11 interns from local colleges and universities have graduated from the training program. The program has proven to be an effective way for businesses to advance their green goals while providing students with valuable skills and career opportunities.



- **Leaders in Sustainability Speaker Series & Industry Forums:** The highly successful speaker series entered its third year in partnership with Westchester Community College to shine the spotlight on key green business topics, including the impact of sea level rise and climate change on business, green procurement

**LEFT** *The objective of the challenge was to create the tallest free-standing structure out of the materials provided (20 sticks of spaghetti, one yard of tape, one yard of string, and one marshmallow) with the marshmallow standing on top. This team activity encouraged creative thinking, collaboration, team work, strategy and time management.*

**ABOVE** *New York League of Conservation Voters, Westchester Cocktail Party and Awards Ceremony Honorees Brad Tito, Program Manager, Communities & Local Governments, NYSEERDA; Dani Glaser, Program Director, Green Business Partnership; Scott Fernqvist, Program Director, Green Business Partnership; Jane Solnick, Community Affairs Director, Con Edison*

**BELOW** *Westchester Green Business met with interfaith leaders from around Westchester County at its first Faith-based Sustainability Roundtable, hosted by White Plains Presbyterian Church.*

*The GBP is holistic and focuses on all areas of environmental sustainability.*





## County *(continued)*

and how White Plains-based Heineken USA is “Brewing a Better World.” Realizing that industry-based cooperation is key to program growth, several smaller roundtable discussions were also organized for health care, library, higher education, real estate, faith-based and non-profit sectors.

- **Recognizing Green Business Achievements:** Key to the program’s continued momentum has been the celebration of green business success. Green business certification ceremonies were held across the region and the 7th Annual Green Business Awards Ceremony at the Briarcliff Manor was a major highlight from the past year. Dr. Marsha Gordon, President and CEO of the BCW was joined by Green Business Partnership Directors Dani Glaser

and Scott Fernqvist to recognize a prestigious group of honorees for outstanding achievement, including the Hendrick Hudson Free Library, Port Chester Carver Center, DeCicco & Sons, Blue Book Building & Construction Network, Field Goods and United States Tennis Association

### **Protecting and Promoting Westchester’s Parks**

The BCW has long been a supporter of maintaining the infrastructure of our County. Of critical importance is the stewardship of the 18,000 acres of the County park system.

Parks and open spaces are vital to **attracting** and keeping businesses in the County and the recruitment of employees, especially younger adults and young families. The County’ parks provide value in many key areas;

- The County’s parks drive economic value that both improve the tax base and increase property values. Over \$180 million dollars in economic activity is generated by our County owned parks alone.
- The County’s parks provide over 1,000 full time jobs each year.
- Studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention find that having places to be physically active can improve individual and community health.



The BCW will continue to support the investment in our parks and facilities and urges the County to reduce or eliminate the multi-million dollar and multi-year backlog of already approved capital projects for County parks. These previously approved projects are awaiting review and the issuance of design/ construction bonds and contracts by County government personnel. Parks are not a luxury any more.



They are a key ingredient that keeps Westchester County thriving and competing.

*Parks and open spaces are vital to attracting and keeping businesses in the county and the recruitment of employees, especially younger adults and young families.*

**LEFT** BCW Executive Vice President and COO John Ravitz; Scott Fernqvist, Program Director, Green Business Partnership; Dani Glaser, Program Director, Green Business Partnership; Ric Swierat, Executive Director, Arc of Westchester at the Westchester Green Business Nonprofit Sustainability Roundtable

**ABOVE** Camp Morty in North Salem is operated by the Westchester Parks Foundation in partnership with the Westchester County's Department of Social Services, Department of Community Mental Health and Department of Parks. It provides a quality outdoor traditional summer camp experience for children ages 8 to 15, many of whom are in foster care, live in homeless shelters, or are under child protective services.

**BELOW** Westchester Parks Foundation's Bicycle Sundays program is annual event where bicyclists, skaters, joggers and walkers take over 6.5 miles of the Bronx River Parkway.



# State

It is critical that New York State remain competitive. It is for that reason that the BCW continues to advocate that state government work to remove burdens and obstacles that prevent economic growth and job creation by stressing that the impact on taxes, business fees, burdensome regulatory requirements and lengthy approval processes cause real issues for creating new jobs in Westchester County and the Hudson Valley.

In 2018, the state will be facing a \$4.4 billion dollar deficit. Washington's tax legislation that passed in December of 2017 will also have serious ramifications for New York, especially with the state and local tax deductions now capped at \$10,000. Due to these fiscal challenges, the BCW once again is calling for the adoption of necessary steps that are needed to solve the state's structural and ongoing fiscal problems.

It is essential that the state make serious efforts to reduce costs for job creators, taxpayers, local government and school districts. To that end, the

BCW will continue to **advocate for strong mandate relief and regulatory reform legislation** during the 2018 legislative session.

New York has too many state laws and regulations that contribute to the high costs of local government. Westchester, like other municipalities across the state, continues to be hit with mandates and fees that cause serious consequences. State Government must make mandate relief a top priority. This year, the BCW will meet with the county's state legislative delegation to urge them to concentrate on serious mandate relief legislation.

It is incumbent on the state legislature to:

- Continue to create enhanced tax credits for small businesses and adopt new small business tax reform policies that encourage businesses to have the resources to expand in New York State.
- New York has approximately 140,000 pages of regulations. From 2006 to 2015, 2,750 new rules were proposed by New York state agencies, an average of 275 each year. The regulatory barrage in New York must end. Businesses that are looking to relocate or expand in New York need to see that state government is being proactive in **removing obstacles and burdens**



that have a negative impact on their day to day operations. In 2018, the State Legislature must finally pass a serious regulatory reform package to help reduce the state's onerous regulatory burden.

- Continue to pass on-time budgets in the "light of day." The BCW urges the Governor and the Legislature to get back to passing an on-time balanced budget that is fiscally responsible. The passing of the state budget should not occur in the early hours of the morning. Debating and voting on the budget should be done in a transparent manner that gives the public the opportunity to have a clear understanding of the state's spending plan.
- Reduce the cost of construction on public-private projects. The state must reduce the costs of construction by repealing the Wicks Law and reforming the Public Construction Act.

- Reform the Scaffold Law. Reforming this law will continue to be one of the major legislative priorities for the BCW in 2018. The law, (Labor Law 240/241) was first enacted in the late 19th century. It holds property owners, employers and contractors **ABSOLUTELY LIABLE** for "gravity related" injuries that happen on the job. What this means is that there is no defense from a lawsuit, even if worker's gross negligence contributed to the accident. Even parties that had no supervisory control over the worker are held liable. New York is the **ONLY** state in the country that still keeps this law on the books.

In addition:

- The Scaffold Law costs taxpayers \$785 million annually.

*BCW continues to advocate that state government work to remove burdens and obstacles that prevent economic growth and job creation.*

LEFT NYS Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli briefs BCW members on NYS's economic climate at the BCW's Political Leadership Series.

BELOW BCW members meet with senior NYS Senate staff members to discuss the BCW's 2017 Legislative Agenda during the Albany Lobby Day.





## State *(continued)*

***The BCW urges the Governor and the Legislature to pass Public Private Partnership legislation.***

- Local governments pay higher costs for capital projects whether the work is done directly or through private contractors.
- More than half of the top 30 highest settlements resulted from Scaffold Law Claims and of those 25% were against public entities.
- To date 33 County Legislatures in New York have passed resolutions calling on state government to reform the Scaffold Law.
- The number of Scaffold Law cases has increased 500% since 1990 even though the rate of injury has decreased.
- The Scaffold Law costs the private sector an estimated \$1.49 billion annually.

It is important to note that reforming the Scaffold Law would not diminish worker safety rules and regulations. Over the last six years, the BCW has taken a leadership role in a state-wide organized effort regarding this issue, which has included meeting

with every member of the Westchester state legislative delegation both in Albany and in their district offices.

In 2018, The BCW urges the state legislature to:

- Prohibit New Mandates. The state should not impose any new mandates on municipalities school districts and taxpayers. The BCW urges the Governor and the Legislature to create meaningful legislation during this year's legislation session that focuses on alleviating the burdens of mandates that are detrimental to local municipalities.
- Small Business Tax Reform. There has been positive movement in recent years to adopt business tax reductions for small businesses. The BCW urges the Governor and State Legislature to continue to provide small businesses with more tax cut opportunities.





- Reform the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process. In Westchester County and in other counties across the state, it is clear that the SEQR process has been used to cause serious delays in getting projects completed in a timely manner. This delay causes local municipalities to at times abandon economic development projects, which then prevents new jobs and revenue from being generated. The BCW urges the Governor and the Legislature to amend and in some cases eliminate the SEQR rules and regulations that have been documented to cause unnecessary delays for important projects throughout the state.
- As already stated, the BCW urges the Governor and the Legislature to pass **Public Private Partnership** legislation which would enable New York State to be on the forefront of the public-private partnership movement. If passed, this legislation would allow New York to authorize private entities to design and build, finance, operate and maintain infrastructure. Public Private Partnership projects would create new jobs that would bring major revenue to Westchester County and the rest of the state.
- The BCW continues to support the expansion and **permanent** extension of the design-build method of project delivery. The design-build model was used successfully in the New Mario Cuomo Bridge project.
- The BCW supports amendments to the state's Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (MWBE) program to ensure that it includes realistic, attainable participation targets and provides waivers that are fairly applied.

LEFT BCW Board Chair Anthony Justic, BCW President & CEO Marsha Gordon, NYS Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman, BCW Executive Committee Board Member George Lence and BCW Executive Vice President and COO John Ravitz

BELOW Over 180 businesses and 1,500 attendees participated in the 2017 BCW Annual Business Expo, the largest table top business tradeshow in the Hudson Valley.



# State *(continued)*

- The BCW continues to support legislation authorizing minority non-CPA ownership in public accountancy firms.

## Economic Development

Comparative employment trends continue to be the best available indicators of whether New York State's fiscal policies are fostering economic growth. It is clear that New York State still must continue to make increasing private sector job growth a top priority. The BCW has seen improvements in this area for both Westchester County and the Hudson Valley Region in certain sectors but much more work needs to be done to ensure that the county's unemployment rate does not grow.

The BCW will continue to advocate that the most effective economic development program is the creation of a more competitive business environment, which can only occur when New York State acts to lower state imposed taxes, fees, assessments and employer mandates.

The BCW will continue to support the Governor's continuation of the state's **Regional Economic Development Councils**, which for the last seven years helped create a comprehensive strategic plan that has catalyzed job creation and economic development in the state. In 2017, the Mid-Hudson Valley (which includes Westchester County) Region received one of the "Top Performer" Awards and received \$84 million which will be used to fund transformative and sustainable projects all across the region.

- The BCW supports the continuation of the state's Qualified Emerging Technology Company Tax Credit for capital training programs.
- The BCW urges state government to extend the Post-Production Film Tax Credit which will continue to allow New York State to be a leader in the post-production sector. It is important to note that in the last two years, over 190 film and television projects applied for the credit,

*The BCW will continue to support the Governor's continuation of the state's Regional Economic Development Councils.*





which the state estimated would generate a record-breaking number of new jobs and bring revenue to the state.

- The BCW supports adopting broad reforms in the state's business tax to reduce compliance costs and make the state's tax code more supportive on in-state investments and job creation.

### **Empire City Casino — a proven revenue generator and job creator**

The newly licensed upstate casinos in New York are underperforming at best. Their revenue projections are off by thirty percent at some properties and they are not providing the expected level of support to local governments. The BCW feels compelled to remind both the Governor and State Legislature to look south. The state, Hudson Valley, and Westchester County are at risk of losing on the gambling bet, and losing big.

New York is a leader in the gaming industry worldwide and Westchester County is home to one of the most prominent casinos and entertainment destinations in the tristate area, Empire City Casino. With an annual payroll of more than \$45 million and more than 1,300 employees, including representatives from 14 unions, Empire City is critical to the economic growth of this county and the state as a whole.

Each year, New Yorkers statewide directly benefit from the nearly \$300 million Empire City generates for state education. Comparatively, the new full-gaming casinos licensed upstate, including the fourth of which is set to open in the Catskills early in 2018, are projected to generate a combined \$260 million for education annually. Simple math demonstrates that these four full-gaming casinos will provide less per year for education than Empire City does on its own

*LEFT NYS Senator and Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins presents BCW President and CEO Marsha Gordon with the NYS's 2017 Women of Distinction Award.*

## State *(continued)*

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as a VLT facility. Empire City generates hundreds of millions more to support the horse racing industry, as well as state and local governments. These funds are a result of an effective seventy percent tax rate paid by Empire City and an additional ten percent directed to support the racing industry.

Competition is intensifying as neighboring states aggressively pursue new casinos and gaming opportunities that threaten New York's existing casino revenues and jobs. New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Pennsylvania all have plans to expand full-gaming properties within close proximity to New York's casinos. New York must not stand by idly as neighboring states take action. Recognizing the need to better compete, New Yorkers approved seven new casinos in a referendum in 2013. Four of the licenses have been awarded. The remaining casino licenses are not scheduled to be

awarded for another five years.

Empire City has been put in the untenable position of not only lying in wait for five years while full-gaming casinos develop around them, but also having to then make their case for a full-gaming license after decades of demonstrating a record of success. Westchester County knows that the case has already been made and there should be no disputing that Empire City is the only suitable option in this region for a full-gaming license.

With 8 million visitors a year, Empire City has proven they can compete and draw tourists and gaming dollars to their facility. The economic benefits of this success for Westchester County and the Hudson Valley cannot be overstated. In order for Empire City to physically expand to meet market demands, their hands must be untied. Empire City has the opportunity to generate significantly more revenue with the ability to host poker tournaments and implement sports betting.

In light of these facts, the BCW calls on Governor Cuomo and the State Legislature to remove the roadblocks that prevent Empire City from developing its full potential as a destination resort to stem the hemorrhage of New York dollars to neighboring states. To do otherwise is to put at great risk hundreds of



millions of dollars of revenue the state has come to depend on, and will allow our neighboring states to continue to increase revenues and develop their workforces using dollars originating from New York.

More than \$500 million of private investment has been made in Empire City and the property is ripe for development. The state must not stand in the way of allowing this vital economic engine to reach its full potential and fairly compete with full-gaming facilities being developed in close proximity to our New York borders. If the state continues to prohibit Empire City to transition into a full gaming facility for the next five years, it must at least provide incentives that help Empire City improve its facilities in anticipation of a full-gaming license being awarded.

And most importantly, as Governor Cuomo and our state legislators consider where to site the additional full-gaming casino licensed facilities, they must consider the recent experience on Long Island, where both counties struggled to site new VLT facilities due to community objections. This should serve as an example and cause for concern. Westchester County businesses and residents will not stand idly by while their communities are put in upheaval to site new casino developments, when Empire City is perfectly positioned to become one of the greatest economic successes the region and state have seen in our lifetimes.



The BCW will continue to urge our state leaders and Legislature to put in place a path for Empire City to continue to grow and strive, and to understand the risk that is facing hundreds of millions in annual revenue and 1,300 jobs. The BCW looks forward to being a part of these discussions.

### **Child Care**

Affordable, accessible and quality child care is a critical component in providing a healthy and productive workforce. The BCW will be working with the Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc. to remind the Governor and State Legislature that adequate funding must be provided to invest in child care subsidy programs. The BCW supports the governor's new Child Care Availability Task Force as a collective effort to strengthen the state's child care system. In addition, stabilizing the state's child care workforce and infrastructure must also be a priority that needs to be addressed during the 2018 legislative session.

*The BCW, with the Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc., will work to remind the Governor and State Legislature that adequate funding must be provided for child care subsidy programs.*



# State *(continued)*

## Housing Issues

Housing is critical to attracting employers and employees to Westchester County. That is why the BCW will continue to work with the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors in supporting the following legislation;

- The Transparency and Disclosure Act that would bring greater transparency to the process of considering the sales of shares in a co-operative housing corporation by requiring a timeline for cooperative boards to act on applications as well as producing a written statement of reason when withholding consent of purchase.
- Increasing the threshold for the Mansion Act which would increase the minimum price threshold at which the so called “Mansion Tax” is triggered. The Mansion Tax imposes an additional 1% tax on buyers who purchase a home for \$1 million or more.
- Reinstatement of the STAR Exemption Program which would repeal sections of Part A of Chapter 17 of the Laws of 2016 which converted the STAR benefit to a credit instead of an up-front savings for homeowners. This legislation would sunset the STAR credit program and replace it with the STAR Exemption program for new homeowners affected by the change.



## Energy Issues

The BCW, like most of the region, was taken by the surprise announcement last year that the Indian Point Energy Center, the provider of approximately 25% of our region's electricity with virtually no carbon emissions, will cease operations in 2021—after a decade of seeing license renewal for the plant. The BCW has always supported the efforts of having the plant relicensed. It is important to note that the plant's owner and operator, Entergy, has worked tirelessly to ensure the safe and productive operation of Indian Point and continues to be committed to maintaining the highest standards of plant operations through the closure date.

While the shutdown of Indian Point is not immediate, it nonetheless possess a wide range of significant and complex challenges for our future economy, our businesses and for Westchester residents. The BCW urges state policymakers to develop a clear and transparent

***The BCW urges state policymakers to develop a clear and transparent plan to replace Indian Point's electricity;***

plan to replace Indian Point's electricity; assure reliability of the electric system in the Hudson Valley and mitigate the reduction in economic activity and tax revenues and limit the increased air pollution.

The BCW will certainly oppose any efforts to impose additional financial hardships on either Indian Point or the local community.

### ***Natural Gas Infrastructure- Algonquin Pipeline System- Enbridge***

The Algonquin natural gas pipeline system has been operating safely in New York, and more specifically in Westchester County, since the early 1950's. The current Atlantic Bridge project involves upgrading Algonquin's existing pipeline system within our region. This project will directly and indirectly create economic benefits for New York State and Westchester County, by increasing both state and local tax revenues as well as generating local jobs. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approved the Atlantic Bridge project in 2017. Construction has begun and the new pipeline will be in-service by the end of the year.

The demand for natural gas in New York State is growing and projections indicate that this trend will persist for the foreseeable future. Both the federal government and numerous state/local governments have encouraged the increase use of natural gas because it is an

environmentally preferable alternative to either coal or oil. This is due to the fact that the use of natural gas produces fewer greenhouse gas emissions than either alternative. The Algonquin pipeline system helps provide clean, affordable natural gas to homes and businesses throughout the Northeast.

The BCW supports legislation that would provide incentives to facilitate the extension of natural gas distribution lines in New York. Clean burning natural gas is a cost effective energy source. Therefore access should be expanded whenever possible to the residents and businesses of New York.

The BCW also supports efforts to reduce energy costs and promote adequate and diverse energy suppliers to help support economic growth. With those goals in mind, the BCW favors a significant reduction in ratepayers assessments imposed by the Public Service Commission (PSC). Ratepayer funds should support the adoption of more cost effective and market driven solutions to achieving social objectives.



# State *(continued)*

**The BCW  
opposes any  
attempt to create a  
single-payer health  
insurance system  
in New York  
State.**

## Healthcare

The BCW will continue to educate the business community on all the aspects of the New York State of Health Exchange, including what tax credits are available for employers who offer health insurance to their employees.

The BCW continues to call for the adoption of strong transparency regulations for the Department of Financial Services (DFS) that sets the rates for the health insurance plans under the New York State of Health Exchange.

The BCW supports the enactment of Medical Liability Tort Reform to rein in the costs of medical malpractice insurance.

The BCW opposes any attempt to create a single-payer health insurance system in New York State whereby all accounts would bankrupt the state.

## Environment

Improving and investing in Westchester's clean water infrastructure projects is a top priority of the BCW. As a member of state-wide Clean Water Jobs Creation Coalition, the BCW will once again urge the Governor and the Legislature to continue to invest the necessary funding so that key projects can move forward throughout Westchester County through New York State's



Clean Water Grant. These projects will help to create new jobs and send a strong message to the business community that the county is working to make the right investments in this area for the environment and for the local economy.





## Transportation

As an advocate for initiatives that will strengthen the state's economy, the BCW has taken a leadership role in dozens of important transportation issues. The creation of the new Mario M. Cuomo Bridge was a top priority of the BCW. Having the most significant infrastructure project built on time will be another economic development tool that will be used to recruit and retain businesses to Westchester County and the Hudson Valley.

Three years ago, the BCW joined a state-wide organization "Rebuild New York" to urge the Governor and the Legislature to fund state and local roads, bridges and other transportation systems such as airports and rail that need major repairs. There is widespread agreement that New York needs

to invest more in its infrastructure to remain competitive and create jobs.

The BCW will be closely watching the debate during this year's legislative session on the subject of New York City congestion pricing. Any new proposals in this area needs to address the impact that it could cause to Westchester's businesses and residents.

## Education

Preparing New York State's students to acquire the skills needed to attend college and/or prepare them to enter the work force will continue to be a top priority for the BCW. Two years ago, the BCW joined a state-wide coalition of civil rights, education, parent and business organizations to continue to engage in serious conversations on how schools can

**ABOVE** BCW Board Members Cindy Rubino, Ellen Lynch, Sal Rajput, Jon Dorf and Ken Theobalds join BCW President and CEO Marsha Gordon at the opening of the new Mario M. Cuomo Bridge.



## State *(continued)*

raise the achievement levels for their students in a responsible, reasonable and inclusive manner.

The BCW will continue to advocate that all changes in these areas be designed to increase parent confidence in the process, as well as get more feedback from teachers on how these new programs are implemented. Employers in Westchester County need to know that our education system is giving students the tools they need to compete and succeed in an increasingly competitive global market.

The BCW continues to support the expansion of high quality CTE Programs, including expanding access to P-Tech schools and establishing regional high schools.

***The BCW believes the Legislature should improve the state's successful Tuition Assistance Program by increasing the maximum award and permitting graduate students to participate in it.***



### Higher Education

Having an educated workforce is critical to maintaining Westchester County's economic vitality and the BCW believes that higher education should be accessible and affordable in order to meet the needs of the many companies that call the Lower Hudson Valley home. To that end, the BCW believes the Legislature should improve the state's successful Tuition Assistance Program by increasing the maximum award and permitting graduate students to participate in it. The Legislature should modify the Enhanced Tuition Awards Program to attract additional participants by removing government-imposed caps on tuition charges and permitting campuses to recognize existing campus-provided institutional grant aid. The program should also be made available to students at for-profit colleges. The Legislature should maintain the Bundy Aid Program, a successful program that helps make college more affordable. The State should also expand the tax deduction for New York's 529 Plan to encourage families to save for higher education expenses.



# Federal

The BCW will continue to work with our congressional delegation on numerous issues in 2018 including the following;

- The BCW has consistently urged congress to adopt common-sense tax reform to simplify the process and lower rates for businesses and individuals. The tax reform bill that was passed in December of 2017 tried to accomplish some of those goals. Unfortunately the bill has many areas of concerns for New York state tax payers. The new limits that New Yorker's will have regarding state and local tax deductions could have a chilling effect on the state's economy and the BCW urges Congress to continue to monitor this fluid situation.
- The BCW once again calls on Congress to reduce federal regulatory burdens to ease bureaucracy with which businesses continue to struggle.
- The BCW continues to support the reauthorization of the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, which provides an increased focus on the academic achievement of career and technical education students and strengthens the connections between secondary and postsecondary education.
- The BCW supports investing in federal R&D programs that help businesses develop new technologies which then create new private sector jobs.
- The BCW recognizes the importance for education reform and supports the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. The BCW believes that higher education should be accessible and affordable in order to meet the needs of the region's workforce, and believes that the federal government should be making larger investments in loan and grant programs, without restrictions on a borrower's major, to ensure a college diploma is a reality for everyone.
- The debate over immigration reform is ongoing. With the rhetoric continuing to rise on this sensitive issue, the BCW urges the federal government to focus on reforms that protect our country's security, but never loses sight of the important role that immigrants have in creating economic prosperity for our country.

***The BCW calls on Congress to reduce federal regulatory burdens to ease bureaucracy with which businesses continue to struggle.***



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