

2026
LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



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Governmental Action

John Ravitz
Executive Vice President/COO

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2026 OVERVIEW



The Business Council of Westchester (BCW) is the county's largest and most prestigious business membership organization, representing more than 1,100 members, including multinational corporations, hospitals, universities, biotech pioneers, not-for-profits, entrepreneurs and companies of all sizes. As the county's only business membership organization focusing on advocacy and economic development, the BCW's members enjoy unparalleled access to today's top thought leaders, diverse business development opportunities and lawmakers at all levels of government.

The BCW's 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, statewide, national and international level, which has served to create opportunities for business growth in Westchester and throughout the Hudson Valley.

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

Seated from left: Steve Horton, President, Grandview Consulting Group; Mickey Jamal, CEO, Chestnut Market; Christina Chan, Senior Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Regeneron; Jill Singer, President, Jill Singer Graphics; Cynthia Delfino-Birdsall, President & CEO, YMCA Central and Northern Westchester; James L. Giangrande, Partner, Altium Wealth Management, and George Williams, President & CEO, A.G. Williams Painting Company

Standing, from left: Kenneth Plummer, President, Forward Thinkers Development; Sam Jamal, COO, Chestnut Market; Event Co-Chair Joseph McCoy, Market President, Commercial Banking, Valley Bank; BCW President & CEO Marsha Gordon; BCW Senior Vice President of Events and Development Amanda DePalma; Event Co-Chair Elizabeth Bracken-Thompson, Partner, Thompson & Bender, and BCW Chairman Jamie Schutzer, Senior Partner, Alera Group.



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 interests may be affected.
- ✓ **Serve** as a resource for information and a 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 statewide.

THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE BCW'S LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Each 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 opinions 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, as well as all statewide elected officials, will receive a copy of the BCW's 2026 Legislative Agenda.



Members of the Westchester County Board of Legislators joined BCW President & CEO Marsha Gordon and Executive Vice President/COO John Ravitz and event sponsors for the 2025 BCW's Annual Westchester Board of Legislators Reception.

CURRENT CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

In 2026, governments at all levels will face critical challenges. The BCW will continue to be a strong voice for the Westchester business community. The BCW will urge our elected officials to **adopt sound policies that lead to sustainable economic growth** that

will, in turn, create much-needed jobs in all business sectors. The BCW looks forward to continuing meaningful discussions with our county, state and federal elected officials on the many issues presented in this Legislative Agenda to ensure that the collective voice of the county's business community is heard.

The BCW's Smart Development Working Group held its annual roundtable meeting with the members of the Westchester Senate and Assembly Delegation to discuss key budget and economic development issues.



COUNTY

REMAINING FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE

Westchester County will continue to face serious fiscal challenges in 2026. The BCW is proud of the strong working relationship that we have with County Executive Ken Jenkins and his administration. In 2026, the BCW will also continue their strong partnership with the members of the County Board of Legislators to promote economic development in Westchester County. In December 2025, the Board of Legislators voted and approved the county's 2026 \$2.5 billion Executive Budget. The BCW understands the tremendous challenges that the county government has been facing due to cuts that were made in Washington, and understands the responsible reductions that had to be made in the 2026 county budget. As we have done each year, we continue to state the importance of maintaining Westchester County's strong bond ratings. We are pleased that Fitch Ratings and Standard & Poor's have given the county a solid "AAA" (stable) credit rating. This designation of a stable rating sends a strong message to the business community that Westchester County's fiscal house is in order, even in these challenging times. The BCW will also advocate against any new unnecessary regulations and fees that will

cause businesses additional hardships. Now, more than ever, the economic health of Westchester County is dependent upon our county government making the right decisions to ensure fiscal responsibility for the future.

It is also essential that Westchester's municipal governments do all they can to assist businesses in all sectors. In 2026, the BCW encourages all county municipalities to look to adopt programs that will offer a practical, manageable and viable approach to revitalize its local businesses while preserving the character and scale of their communities. To this end, local governments must continue to engage their citizens to be active and positive participants in this process that will only help Westchester's businesses move forward.

In 2025, the BCW held numerous roundtable discussions with members of the Board of Legislators to discuss concerns about specific pieces of legislation that the Board was proposing to adopt. During these sessions, business owners of all sizes gave concrete examples of what the negative impact would be if certain legislative initiatives were adopted. It is critical that county legislative leaders understand that passing legislation that has unintended consequences could serve as a barrier for future employers' ability to create more jobs in Westchester County.

BCW Executive Vice President/COO John Ravitz; John Manginelli, President-Hudson Valley/ Metro New York & Great Lakes Regional Executive KeyBank Real Estate Capital, Congressman George Latimer, BCW President & CEO Marsha Gordon, Congressman Mike Lawler, and BCW Chairman Jamie Schutzer.



During the BCW's 2025 Annual Dinner, BCW President & CEO Marsha Gordon interviewed Michael Dowling, CEO Emeritus, Northwell Health; Dr. David Lubarsky, President & CEO of Westchester Medical Center Health Network; and Paul Dunphy, President of NYP Hudson Valley Hospital & Senior Vice President & CEO at NYP Westchester.

In 2026, the BCW will again remind the county government that Westchester prides itself on having a strong and vibrant workforce. Our employers are committed to their employees and passing legislation that becomes direct mandates and causes unintended consequences to businesses sends a message to employers that, in Westchester County, government will determine how they manage their workforce. Creating that type of environment as the country continues to re-emerge will not bring more permanent jobs to Westchester.

In 2026, the BCW will also continue helping to make the county's Element 46 Program a success. The program was designed to help startup businesses succeed by providing them with free workspace,

training, mentoring and access to pro bono consulting services. This program and other like-minded programs will be critical in helping the county encourage entrepreneurs to create businesses that will be part of the county's permanent workforce.

THE BCW'S COALITION FOR WESTCHESTER AIRPORT

In 2026, the BCW's Coalition for Westchester Airport will advocate for additional and necessary enhancements to make the airport more attractive so that it can continue to play an important role in creating economic development opportunities for the county. The Coalition will remind its political leaders of the following important facts:

The 2025 Rising Stars class was honored by over 500 guests who attended the BCW's Rising Stars Celebration.



- ✓ The airport is a **key element in the county’s transportation infrastructure.**
- ✓ The airport is one of the county’s **most valuable economic assets.**
- ✓ The airport is **essential to attracting and retaining businesses** in Westchester.
- ✓ The airport **employs thousands of people** in diverse industries.
- ✓ The airport is a **tool for workforce development and training.**
- ✓ The airport **helps maintain a healthy tax climate.**

Over 120 businesses have joined the BCW’s Coalition for Westchester Airport as it continues to advocate for a new partnership between the county and an operator with a proven track record who will improve essential services and address important environmental and quality-of-life issues that the business community, the traveling community and the neighboring community are contending with. We look forward to working with the Jenkins Administration on this important economic development issue.

THE BCW’S WESTCHESTERWORKS PROGRAM

Six years ago, the BCW created a program called WestchesterWorks, a social-justice program designed to recruit and offer free advanced training to local residents in underrepresented communities to enable them to qualify for skilled jobs in the construction trades in Westchester County. A focus on accountability sets this public-private inclusion initiative apart because

County Executive Ken Jenkins at the BCW’s 2025 Annual Dinner.



program staff will actively monitor the apprentices’ attendance, performance, and needs to ensure program success.

To address longtime, local concerns about diversity and the lack of employment opportunities in the construction trades for members of marginalized communities, the BCW’s Smart Development Working Group helped establish **WestchesterWorks, a proactive approach to opening career paths.** The effort is a collaboration among the BCW’s real estate development members, the Associated Building and Contractors Empire State and Westhab, which will leverage its considerable community network to identify apprentices.

This program will be a landmark investment that major real estate development leaders in Westchester are making to address the local hiring issue by providing a no-cost avenue for young adults who are not pursuing college. Apprenticeships greatly enhance skills and establish professional relationships that help to begin and grow careers in construction. The BCW will continue to urge Westchester County government, as well as other municipalities, to engage in an active partnership to support this program.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The BCW recognizes that **having the appropriate talent to fill available jobs in Westchester is more important than ever to assist in the county’s economic recovery.** Over the past seven years, many Westchester residents either voluntarily left the workforce or lost their jobs and will be looking for new opportunities to rejoin the workforce. In 2026, as a member of the county’s Workforce Investment Board, the BCW will continue to advocate for funding on the federal, state and county levels for workforce training programs to meet the job needs of our key employers, especially in health care, life sciences, hospitality and IT. The BCW has a special long-standing commitment to employment opportunities for all. Additionally, the BCW’s partnerships with Westchester institutions of higher learning will continue to provide the groundwork for building the workforce of the future.

PARKS

Parks and open spaces are foundational to the economic, environmental, and social vitality of Westchester County. As we look ahead to 2026 and beyond, maintaining and enhancing these assets is not only a quality-of-life issue — it is an essential business issue. **Quality parks and recreational facilities directly strengthen Westchester’s economic climate by attracting employers, talent, and tourism.** National studies continue to show that access to high-quality parks ranks among the top three factors businesses consider when choosing where to locate and where to invest in their workforce.

The last several years of increasingly severe weather across the region have underscored a critical reality: **green infrastructure is no longer optional.** Westchester’s parks and open spaces function as a frontline defense against extreme weather, flooding, and heat. They absorb stormwater, reduce damage to homes and businesses, and provide safe community gathering spaces in times of crisis. In 2026, the business community has a clear stake in supporting legislative action that strengthens the resiliency of these open spaces, including funding for stormwater mitigation, ecological restoration, and climate-adaptive infrastructure.



The iconic Westchester County Center — approaching its centennial in 2030 — remains one of our county’s most recognizable civic and economic assets. The BCW supports reimagining the County Center for the next century, particularly in light of the failure of other large entertainment and social venues to materialize. Businesses and residents alike should engage actively in a robust design process to help shape a modern, flexible, multi-use venue that drives economic activity while honoring its historic legacy.

Additionally, sustained and strategic investment in county parks capital projects remains a top BCW priority. Infrastructure repairs, facility upgrades, and modernization projects not only keep our parks safe and accessible for a rapidly growing user base — they also generate significant economic activity. These projects support local contractors, create jobs, and inject millions of dollars into Westchester’s economy each year. Private-sector partnership is essential to achieving these goals, and the business community’s ongoing advocacy ensures that parks remain at the forefront of the County’s legislative and budget agenda.

As Westchester continues to face tightening federal and state funding streams, non-tax revenue and private investment are increasingly important to preserving our county parks at the standard our residents and businesses expect. To guide this next era of investment, the BCW strongly supports updating the Westchester County Parks Master Plan — untouched since 2002. A comprehensive, inclusive 2026 Master Plan will help ensure that future decisions reflect today’s realities: new recreational trends, climate resiliency needs, demographic shifts, emerging technologies, and the economic role parks play countywide. The BCW

encourages the County Executive and Board of Legislators to prioritize and authorize this essential study.

Now more than ever, Westchester’s business community and its park system are interdependent. By championing forward-thinking legislation, robust capital funding, climate-resilient infrastructure, and a modernized Master Plan, we can safeguard one of the county’s greatest economic engines and preserve the unparalleled quality of life that makes Westchester a premier place to live, work, and do business.

THE BCW’S WESTCHESTER INNOVATION NETWORK PROGRAM

Five years after its launch, the BCW’s Westchester Innovation Network (WIN) program continues to generate success stories between innovators and their matches.

The BCW launched WIN in December 2021 to drive economic growth and development in Westchester County. By reaching out to cutting-edge companies within Westchester and outside of the region and partnering with them, WIN’s goal is to integrate more innovation into our local businesses and municipalities.

The Westchester Innovation Network’s (WIN) City Labs initiative recently delivered ideas for improving the Town of Greenburgh’s food scraps recycling program.



A fruitful collaboration between the Westchester Innovation Network’s (WIN) City Labs initiative and Iona University’s Hynes Institute for Entrepreneurship & Innovation culminated in the delivery of student-led recommendations to address parking challenges in the Village of Mamaroneck’s bustling downtown.

WIN launched with three components:

- 1 The Innovation Match Program attracts innovators to Westchester and pairs them with leading local companies to test their services in real-world settings. The goals are to help local host companies better understand innovation and to provide feedback to innovators who seek product testing.
- 2 The BCW City Labs Program spotlights a host community and teams with students from Iona University to identify innovative projects that will deliver immediate economic benefits to the municipality.
- 3 The WIN Implementation Guide recommends policies to better attract and retain innovators, including funding, job training and incentives.

Far exceeding original projections, WIN’s initial five years attracted over 60 local, national and international innovators who paired with local businesses to test commercially viable innovations. Among WIN’s successes this year are: Immigr8,

who partnered with Richmond Community Services to implement its pioneering artificial-intelligence-driven platform that simplifies visa applications for foreign workers; the Canadian firm EarthSuds, who partnered with Cambria Suites in White Plains to introduce their environmentally-friendly shampoo, conditioner, and body wash tablets designed to minimize plastic waste; and the Australian firm Laronix, who partnered with the Burke Neurological Institute to test and enhance its MIRA Voice device, which uses artificial intelligence to help people with conditions such as spinal cord injuries and cerebral palsy regain clear speech.

The BCW City Labs Program also delivered additional results this past year through the pairing of Iona University with the City of White Plains and the Village of Port Chester to identify projects that deliver immediate economic benefits. Students met with city officials, the community and small business owners in order to successfully bring innovation and technology into each of these cities.

THE BCW'S AI ALLIANCE 360 SERIES

Last year marked the second year since the creation of the BCW's AI Alliance 360 series, which includes high-level programs focused on how AI is being implemented in different business sectors.

Programming in 2025 included:

- ✓ Emerging Technologies and AI Innovations Conference
- ✓ Governing the Future: The Ethical Frontier of AI Regulations & Policy
- ✓ The Promise and the Perils of Incorporating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the Workplace (Human Resources Council Meeting)
- ✓ The Evolution of Intelligence: AI Then, Now and Tomorrow (BCW Podcast Network-What's Trending Episode)

In 2026, the BCW is excited to announce the AI Impact Summit-Transforming Industries & Communities Program which will be a summit for AI companies and companies using AI. This summit will help give BCW members the most updated information regarding this evolving technology.

Additionally, this year, the BCW will be launching AI Intensive 2026, a groundbreaking **professional development program designed to elevate local business leaders' proficiency in artificial intelligence** that gives small businesses unprecedented access to AI tools, training and support. Supported by Google.org, this five-week comprehensive course, starting in the spring of this year, offers a guided learning experience focused on hands-on application and responsible AI use. Each participating business that completes the cohort will receive Google.org-funded support to accelerate AI adoption and technology upgrades tailored to their organizational needs.

BCW members are learning about AI through a series of presentations, including Emerging Technologies and AI Innovations with Keynote Speaker Cori Moreno, AI Business Strategist, Google.



STATE

This past year, the BCW was proud to work with the Business Council of New York State, the New York State Economic Development Council and other state-wide organizations to commission a report titled "Blueprint for New York". The BCW was part of this important coalition and hosted the first business roundtable for the project, which allowed business leaders the opportunity to share their concerns and give suggestions on eliminating certain state regulations and mandates. Some of the key recommendations in the "Blueprint" that the BCW will be urging the Governor and the Legislature to focus on in 2026 include:

Business Climate – to improve the predictability, clarity, speed, and cost of doing business in New York:

- ✓ Recommend and participate in comprehensive regulatory review to identify out-of-date and duplicative state regulations, specifically those related to business establishments, investments and operations.
- ✓ Continue to oppose new or increased taxes on businesses of all sizes and industry types, and oppose new or revised legislation reducing business rights and protections.
- ✓ Create opportunities for subject matter experts from the private sector to participate in the discussion and development of new regulations and guidelines for implementation.
- ✓ Reinforce the importance of a fiscal impact analysis being included (and completed) as part of all new legislative and regulatory proposals.
- ✓ Work collaboratively with state agency leadership to identify new technologies, workflows and formats to improve coordination and reduce the administrative burden on residents and businesses.
- ✓ Track and report on state agency review and approval of applications for new business activity, including land use approvals, permit approvals, economic development assistance approvals and others; identify ways to assure timely review and approvals, and assure public transparency of state review/approval processes.
- ✓ Work with state leaders to modernize and improve the communications process for rolling out new regulations to businesses; expand the use of informal, pre-rule proposal discussions with regulated entities and other stakeholders to better inform state agencies on key concerns and alternatives.

NY State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and members of the Westchester Senate Delegation met with BCW President & CEO Marsha Gordon, BCW Board Chair James Schutzer, George Lence, Vice Chair of the BCW's Governmental Action Council, and BCW members during the BCW's 2025 Albany Lobby Day.





BCW facilitated a roundtable discussion with members of the State Legislative Delegation and the leadership team of BCW member Feeding Westchester to discuss critical budget issues.

- ✓ **Support** policy and program changes to improve the consistency and clarity of the Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) program including the certification and renewal process.
- ✓ **Work** with insurance industry organizations to actively pursue participation in the Interstate Insurance compact to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the way insurance products are filed, reviewed, and approved to provide employers and employees quicker access to competitive products.
- ✓ **Assure** that the Regional Economic Development Council process is achieving its objective of better coordinated project reviews by state agencies.
- ✓ **Support** legal reform to reduce abusive and frivolous litigation costs, and ultimately, reduce costs in healthcare, education, construction, local governments and small businesses.

Workforce + Education – to create and train the current and future workforce, support business and industry growth, and provide opportunities for all New Yorkers to gain economic mobility:

- ✓ **Provide** for ongoing dialogue among business and economic development leaders and the Department of Labor (DOL)/Empire State Development/

- Department of Education to ensure that education and training programs match current and expected workforce needs of employers and ensure more timely development and approval of new certification and degree programs to help workers fill current job opportunities.
- ✓ **Work** with the DOL to allow for more flexibility in workforce development formulas, providing more opportunities for educators and employers to interact and address education and training needs.
- ✓ **Create** more childcare options for working parents, explore new solutions for increasing the number of childcare facilities and trained providers including staff-to-child ratios, allowing Industrial Development Agencies (IDAs) to support facilities, streamlined permitting, in-home daycare, and certification costs and requirements.

Infrastructure:

- ✓ **Convene** energy providers, regulators, and developers to identify solutions for meeting the energy capacity and affordability needs for all New Yorkers and revisit the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) goals and mandates based on these outcomes.
- ✓ **Advocate** for the consideration of all energy options to provide adequate and affordable energy to communities throughout the state.

- ✓ **Encourage** creative financing programs and new partnerships to support new ways to bring affordable housing online.
- ✓ **Reduce** regulatory barriers associated with the Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP) and simplify project requirements to drive the redevelopment and activation of previously developed sites (flexibility in timelines, elimination of the \$50,000 fee, focus on on-site remediation).
- ✓ **Advocate** for the elimination of unnecessary regulations deterring real estate investment and housing projects to meet market demand (i.e., Good Cause Eviction, public hearing requirements, etc.).
- ✓ **Advocate** for the expansion of the Pro Housing Community designation to allow more communities (cities, towns, villages, counties) to participate in the program.
- ✓ **Collaborate** with economic development organizations and the Department of Housing and Community Development to create a cohesive narrative around the importance of growth in site and housing development.
- ✓ **Support** the funding and expansion of rail, air, and other key transportation and infrastructure investments including the swift deployment of awarded funds.

Innovation

- ✓ **Oppose** new policies and regulations that would inhibit innovation and drive such activities and companies to other states.
- ✓ **Focus** on policies and programs to retain the strength of the entrepreneurial ecosystem (including SBDC, access to capital, grant programs, etc.).

- ✓ **Work** with the Department of Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to realign the structure of funding opportunities to better support climate tech and innovation.

One of the key recommendations that the BCW has been advocating for many years is reforming the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). The BCW supports the Governor’s recent call to reform SEQR. This initiative will spur a series of common-sense reforms to SEQR and executive actions to expedite critical categories of projects that have been consistently found to not have adverse environmental impacts. Together, these actions will allow projects that localities want to move forward and that will not harm the environment to do so faster, while prioritizing smarter growth to ensure that the state continues to protect communities, preserve the environment, and conserve New York’s natural resources. This proposal aligns with the BCW’s objective of fostering a conducive economic environment for businesses.

Last year, the BCW’s annual Albany Lobby Day at the State Capitol was once again well attended. We met and discussed our priorities with Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and members of the Westchester legislative delegation, as well as representatives from the Governor’s office, including her budget director. Throughout the 2025 legislative session, the BCW was actively engaged. Countless meetings were held with leadership and members of both the Senate and Assembly, as well as with the Governor’s office. Additionally, dozens of Memorandums of Support and Opposition on bills of importance to the BCW business community were issued to the State Legislature.

In the year ahead, the BCW will continue to be proactive. **The BCW will be diligent in monitoring the upcoming budget discussions and legislative sessions, and evaluating what the potential impacts may bring to the business community.** The BCW will also continue to remain in constant contact with the Governor, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, and the members of the Westchester legislative delegation to ensure that the Westchester business community's voices continue to be heard. The BCW has enjoyed a long and successful collaborative working relationship with Governor Kathy Hochul, and we look forward to continuing to work with her and her administration. New York State still faces many challenges, and we stand ready to work closely with the Governor as she continues to promote economic development, job creation and housing initiatives in Westchester and across the state.

In 2026, the BCW urges the State Legislature to:

- ✓ **Reject** Antitrust legislation (S.335/A.2015) that would make significant amendments to the General Business Law's provisions regarding illegal monopolies. While it is important for antitrust laws to be enforced against anti-competitive conduct, the resulting vague and broad provisions of this bill would allow enforcement and penalties against business conduct that is clearly pro-competitive, and which results in consumer benefits. The bill would also significantly expand the opportunity to bring cases under antitrust laws by authorizing private class-action suits for the recovery of damages. This legislation

would serve to undermine competition rather than enhance it by creating and applying new, undefined criteria to regulate market behavior. The BCW will continue its work with a statewide coalition of organizations, which have been strong advocates in defeating this legislation the past four years.

- ✓ **Oppose** legislation (S.4641-A) that would ban all non-compete agreements in New York State. Many of Westchester County's employers rely on non-compete agreements with their senior employees to protect their intellectual property, proprietary information and client relationships for some period during which they are prepared to compensate covered employees. Similarly, parties that are acquiring a business or business interests rely on non-compete provisions as a condition of the transaction. If this legislation becomes law, it will disrupt generations of business practices that are deemed essential to protect the intellectual property and proprietary interests of employers, and to maintain a vibrant and innovative economy in New York. The Governor vetoed this legislation in 2023, and we will be working again this year to prevent its passage.

- ✓ **Reject** the "Tax the Rich" agenda that would increase taxes for many New Yorkers. The agenda includes bills to implement: a new progressive income tax structure for high income payers; a capital gains tax; an heir's tax; a mark-to-market tax; a stock transfer tax; and additional taxes on certain business income included in an individual's taxable income.



Assemblymember Amy Paulin, Chair of the Assembly Health Committee, addresses BCW members during the 2025 Albany Lobby Day.

- ✓ **Oppose** any new costly mandates on businesses. As we look to recruit and retain businesses in New York State, it is imperative that the Legislature refrain from passing legislation that imposes costly unfunded mandates on businesses that create an unnecessary layer of regulation that will merely serve as a burden to already struggling businesses across the state. Instead, we should be looking for innovative ways to assist businesses of all sizes so they can continue to operate and contribute to New York's economy.
- ✓ **Oppose** workers' compensation bills, including legislation (S.172/A.84) that proposes a dramatic increase in short-term disability benefits, that would result in higher costs and premiums for all New York State businesses, especially small businesses, at a time when they are contending with unrelenting economic challenges, including widespread inflation, supply chain issues, extensive labor shortages and excessive unemployment insurance costs.
- ✓ **Oppose** legislation that seeks to create a new class of damages awardable in wrongful death lawsuits. This legislation would have a disastrous impact on businesses in the state, endangering our economy. This bill would radically expand the kinds of damages recoverable in wrongful death actions, driving up liability insurance premiums for public

and private entities across the state. Liability insurance premiums are already higher in New York than almost anywhere else in the country. This bill would make it harder to attract new companies, and would discourage local entrepreneurs from pursuing their goals and remaining in New York. The BCW was pleased that the Governor vetoed this bill each year over the past four years.

- ✓ **Oppose** the Consumer and Small Business Protection Act (S.105/A.5287) that would greatly expand New York's Deceptive Acts and Practices Law (GBL §349) and expose small and medium-sized businesses to frivolous lawsuits, as the bill falls short of creating a mechanism by which businesses can effectively comply.
- ✓ **Oppose** the Clean Deliveries Act (S.1180-B/A.3575-B) that would mandate significant new construction and operational standards for "heavy distribution warehouses" that would have adverse economic development and environmental consequences. It would effectively prevent further warehouse development in New York, eliminating major local investment projects while shifting new development and jobs out of state. It would also increase drive times and distances for serving New York customers, resulting in increased regional and local air emissions.

- ✓ **Oppose** the New York HEAT Act (S.4158/A.4870-A) that would prohibit some uses of natural gas and mandate the discontinued use of portions of the gas distribution system impacting decisions to invest or re-invest in gas-dependent operations.
- ✓ **Oppose** the New York Privacy Act (S.3044/A.8158) that would apply to all legal entities that conduct business in New York (with no small business exemption), and would require that all use of personal information must be expressly opted into by the individual.
- ✓ **Oppose** legislation (S.4985/A.1975) that would require certain companies and corporations to report certain data regarding the gender, race, and ethnicity of their employees. The BCW opposes this bill as being unnecessary since it is duplicative of Executive Order 162 and establishes another mandate on businesses by requiring that substantially similar information contained in the Employer Information Report EEO-1 be filed with the New York Secretary of State. This legislation was vetoed by the Governor in 2023, and we will be advocating against its passage again this year.
- ✓ **Oppose** legislation that seeks to regulate the use of electronic monitoring and automated decision tools in employment. While the BCW supports the intent of the legislation to ensure that AI-based tools do not exhibit bias in decision-making, this bill makes fundamental changes in how employers operate in New York, and would present an immense administrative burden that would be very costly for employers to

implement and extraordinarily difficult for the state to enforce.

- ✓ **Oppose** the Governor’s proposed tax on nicotine patches. It is important to note that these patches contain no tobacco and involve no combustion, meaning they avoid the primary source of toxic exposure associated with cigarette smoking. The BCW is concerned that a tax would disincentivize adult smokers from switching to these lower-risk alternatives. Additionally, New York could realize an estimated \$299 million in annual Medicaid savings if the smoking rate among adult Medicaid recipients decreased by only 1%, from 15.2% to 14.2%. These figures underscore how policies that support adult transitions away from cigarettes—not policies that make lower-risk alternatives less accessible—can deliver enormous healthcare cost savings for New York taxpayers and businesses.
- ✓ **Support** increased funding for vital programs that provide much-needed food assistance for hungry New Yorkers. In 2026, the BCW will be working with Feeding Westchester in advocating to fund the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) and Nourish New York (NNY) at \$75 million each; increase SNAP outreach and application assistance through the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) at \$8.5 million; and support legislation to transition to more secure EBT chip cards to protect SNAP benefits from being skimmed. These vital programs support hungry New Yorkers, food relief organizations and New York farmers.



Assemblymember MaryJane Shimsky gives an overview of her legislative priorities to BCW members during the 2025 Albany Lobby Day.

- ✓ **Support** the YMCA of Central and Northern Westchester and the Alliance for YMCA’s Universal Pre-K reimbursement parity with New York City. Currently, all YMCA’s located outside of New York City receive a \$5,400 reimbursement rate per child, while those located in New York City receive \$10,000 per child. The Pre-K services provided to school districts in Westchester are quality programs, and they are missing out on nearly \$4.6 million a year for which they need to find other ways to support these vital programs. Without an increase to the reimbursement rate, the future of these programs is in jeopardy.
- ✓ **Support** a resolution to address the lack of payment to not-for-profits (NFP) by the state. The BCW is very concerned about many NFPs who have been awarded New York State contracts and have completed the work they were required to do, but have not been paid by the state. The state’s continued negligence in timely payments to not-for-profits has created a crisis that threatens the very core of the services these organizations provide. NFPs, often operating on razor-thin margins, are now being asked to shoulder financial burdens they can ill afford. These delays disrupt cash flow and throw budgets into disarray, leaving organizations scrambling to maintain operations while providing essential services to the state’s most vulnerable

populations. The state’s failure to honor its financial commitments creates ripple effects that disrupt lives and weaken the social safety net. While the Governor vetoed legislation addressing these concerns in 2025, the BCW will continue to urge for its passage.

- ✓ **Support** tax reforms to reduce compliance costs for New York-based employers.
- ✓ **Reform** the Scaffold Law in the FY 2027 State Budget. This continues to be one of the major legislative priorities for the BCW in 2026, and was included as a recommendation in the above-mentioned “Blue Print for New York”. The reform of this outdated law would assist the state’s economy and free up millions of dollars in state and municipal budgets, save hundreds of millions in infrastructure costs, and release an estimated two hundred million dollars a year into education budgets across the state.
- ✓ **Ensure** that Westchester’s colleges, health systems, school districts, and employers are partners and beneficiaries of Empire AI initiatives. Provide state funding that supports applied AI research in Westchester. Expand Empire AI programs to include small and mid-sized employers, not only large research institutions. Invest in statewide AI infrastructure, including computing, cloud resources, and broadband, which enables innovation across sectors. New

York State must also ensure that future AI-related legislation, including proposals addressing consumer protections and AI ethical standards, is developed in consultation with the business community.

- ✓ Continue to create enhanced tax credits for small businesses and adopt new small business tax reform policies to assist small businesses, which are vital to the health and well-being of our communities.
- ✓ Continue to pass amendments to the state's Minority and Women's Business Enterprises program to bolster the program, streamline the application process, enhance opportunities and encourage greater participation.
- ✓ Pass yearly on-time budgets in the light of day. The passing of the state budget should not occur in the middle of the night. 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.
- ✓ The BCW continues to oppose the Securing Wages Earned Against Theft (SWEAT) bill (S.2131/A.166) that would allow employees to place a lien on an employer's personal property based on a claim of wage and hour violations. This legislation would be an unjustifiable

burden to Westchester employers, as it allows employees to secure a lean before an allegation is proven. This could potentially affect the credit lines of small businesses and put businesses at risk without any misconduct ever being proven.

- ✓ Oppose over-reaching labor mandates that increase the cost of doing business and oppose legislation that would hold internet service providers subject to the same rules and regulations that power companies must follow. This would lead to less investment, and make New York less competitive to neighboring states.
- ✓ Oppose legislation that would expand the application of the state's False Claims Act to tax issues that would subject individuals and business taxpayers to increased compliance and enforcement uncertainty. The BCW was pleased that the Governor vetoed this bill in 2021, 2022 and 2023.
- ✓ Oppose legislation (S.4473/A.5000) that would allow liquidated damages claims to be filed in State Court. This legislation would have a devastating impact on Westchester's and New York State's small business community and is nothing more than an attempt by the plaintiffs' attorneys to generate income by filing class action lawsuits in State Court. Small businesses are already suffering from enormous financial stress due to

inflation, rising utility bills, economic uncertainty, high insurance premiums, and an exodus of workers from the labor force. Allowing plaintiffs' attorneys to sue small businesses in class-action lawsuits over paperwork violations is absurd. New York State should be protecting small businesses instead of making them targets to easy litigation.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development programs and policies will continue to play a major role in the fiscal condition of Westchester and the rest of the state. They should work to retain jobs, generate new ones and create a competitive environment in which businesses can thrive. **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 supports the Governor's Regional Economic Development Councils (REDC) that catalyze job creation and economic development in the state. The BCW was pleased that the Governor's FY 2026 Executive Budget included \$750 million for economic development, including \$225 million for a new round of REDC awards. The BCW is optimistic that this program will receive funding in the final budget and make its way to communities in Westchester County. Most recently, and among others, the Village of Briarcliff Manor received \$1,972,903 for the third and final phase of the Law Park Drainage project; the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson secured

\$1,156,894 to install new sidewalks and bicycle lanes along Ravensdale Road and Saw Mill River Road; and Extell Hudson Waterfront LLC was approved for \$1,500,000 for a key phase of the Hudson Piers project in Yonkers. This phase includes new retail space and a 34,000-square-foot public park, opening a previously inaccessible section of the waterfront. The wider development aims to address the regional housing shortage by delivering over 1,000 new units, including more than 100 affordable homes.

- ✓ The BCW supports the reauthorization of \$200 million for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and the NY Forward Programs. Many municipalities in Westchester County have already benefited from receiving DRI funding, and we hope that more municipalities will be able to access this program that transforms downtown neighborhoods into vibrant centers. Likewise with the NY Forward Program, this program will help assist developers as we look towards more development in the county.
- ✓ The BCW continues to oppose prevailing wage legislation. Eight years ago, the BCW formed its Smart Development Working Group, comprised of Westchester's most prominent developers, in response to legislation to require the payment of prevailing wages on private construction projects receiving any form of state funding support. While this legislation ultimately passed, we need to be mindful of additional prevailing wage legislation, including a bill that could further increase the cost of private construction projects that bring new residents, new jobs and new opportunities to



At BCW's Albany Lobby Day, (right) Assemblymember Matt Slater with BCW Board Member Stacey Tompkins, and (far right) Senator Shelley Mayer with BCW Board Member Cynthia Delfino-Birdsall.

Westchester County. This legislation which the Governor vetoed in 2024 and 2025, would specifically make both overall eligibility for the state's Brownfield program and eligibility for the program's redevelopment credit for tangible property investments contingent on a project sponsor paying public works prevailing wage for all remedial project-related construction work. This, in turn, would impose higher project costs on Brownfield cleanup projects, thereby acting simply as a deterrent to undertaking these types of projects.

- ✓ The BCW, along with its Smart Development Working Group, appreciated the 2022 extension and strengthening of the Brownfield Cleanup Program that incentivizes private-sector redevelopment of contaminated brownfield sites across the state. However, the BCW urges the Governor and State Legislature to make additional amendments to the program so that more sites can be developed, including extending the time that projects can draw down the qualified tax credits as many larger projects take a longer time to be developed.
- ✓ The BCW supports reinstating funding for RESTORE NY, which has successfully resulted in the removal and restoration of hundreds of sites statewide. This program is unique in that it provides capital assistance to housing development, which

has proven to be critical as the state continues to address the housing crisis. While last year's budget cut the program, the BCW urges that it should be restored with an annual appropriation of \$100 million to help support adaptive reuse projects across the state.

- ✓ The BCW supports increased funding for the New York State Centers for Advanced Technology (CATs) that encourage greater collaboration between private industry and universities in the development and application of new technologies. There are currently 15 certified CATs in the state that have directly created/retained at least 1,970 jobs, leveraged over \$3.2 billion in economic activity, and assisted more than 972 companies across the state. Since funding for CATs has remained flat for more than 15 years, the BCW proposes increased funding of \$1.5 million for each Center for Advance Technology, up from \$1 million in the 2026-2027 budget.
- ✓ The BCW supports increased funding for the New York State Centers of Excellence (COEs). The State currently funds 14 Centers of Excellence (COEs) to foster collaboration between the academic research community and the business sector to develop and commercialize new products and technologies, to promote critical private sector investment in emerging high-technology fields in New York State, and to create and expand

technology-related businesses and employment. Funding for the COEs has remained relatively flat for nearly ten years. Based on a 2016 annual report provided by NYSTAR, every dollar NYS spent on the CATs and COEs created 49 dollars in private investment. There are very few programs that leverage public dollars at the ratio of 49 to 1. Given their economic impact, the BCW supports increasing each center to \$1.5 million annually, or roughly \$500k per center.

- ✓ The BCW supports Industrial Development Agencies (IDAs) and opposes any legislation that seeks to hinder their effectiveness at promoting and assisting the growth of New York State's economy. This includes supporting IDA sales tax exemptions and pilot programs with local towns to incentivize in-state investments and job creation; supporting legislation to authorize IDAs to utilize their funds generated from fees to issue loans and grants to small businesses; opposing legislation (S.1410) to increase the oversight powers of the Authorities Budget Office that would grant it the authority to shut down public authorities or IDAs it deems non-compliant; opposing legislation (S.132/A.4927) that would prevent IDAs from offering a PILOT on school taxes which would lead to IDAs losing projects and ultimately less jobs, less economic activity and less revenue generated for not only school districts, but local municipalities as well; and opposing legislation that was vetoed in 2024 to require that the membership of each IDA include at least a representative of a local labor organization, and either a representative of a school board or a

superintendent of a school district. These last three bills would adversely impact economic development efforts across New York State.

- ✓ The BCW continues to oppose the Securing Wages Earned Against Theft (SWEAT) bill (S.2131/A.166) that would allow employees to place a lien on an employer's personal property based on a claim of wage and hour violations. This legislation would be an unjustifiable burden to Westchester employers, as it allows employees to secure a lien before an allegation is proven. This could potentially affect the credit lines of small businesses and put businesses at risk without any misconduct ever being proven.
- ✓ The BCW continues to oppose legislation that was vetoed by the Governor last year, which would require small businesses organized as Limited Liability Companies to disclose confidential and personally identifiable information to the New York State Department of State. If signed into law, the legislation will undoubtedly place an additional regulatory and cost burden on small businesses, at a time when they are facing increasing economic uncertainty and excessive costs. It will lead to greater confusion, hefty fines, and business suspensions, and will make New York a less competitive place to do business.
- ✓ The BCW supports legislation establishing expanded construction mentorship opportunities for small and minority and women-owned business enterprises. This legislation would close a major access gap in the MWBE Program. As under current law, public agency

The BCW's Smart Development Working Group's Annual Meeting with members of the Westchester State Delegation.



mentorship programs are only available to MWBE contractors who hold a direct contract, or privity, with a state agency or public owner. As a result, MWBE subcontractors working under general contractors are excluded, even though they perform critical work on public projects. This legislation addresses this issue by allowing MWBEs working under private contractors or subcontractors on public works projects to participate in mentorship programs administered by the public agency overseeing the job. This will significantly increase access to training, support, and business development opportunities for smaller MWBE firms. While this legislation was vetoed in 2025, the BCW will urge for its passage in 2026.

- ✓ The BCW supports the expansion of high-quality and affordable broadband access for all New York State residents. Over the past decade, we have seen every sector of our economy benefit from the pace of change in the technology ecosystem, with broadband connectivity being the foundation of this digital economy. Broadband will continue to evolve and usher in new and unparalleled experiences for businesses and consumers. The BCW asks that the state works cooperatively with the private sector to streamline coordination and eliminate incongruous policies that make fiber-optic deployments cost prohibitive; to roll back onerous regulatory requirements, like the use and occupancy fee for state-owned rights-of-way, that disincentivize infrastructure needed to expand connectivity; resist the urge to add duplicative layers of punitive regulations on the telecommunications industry; and support and facilitate

the development of 5G small designs that allow multiple carriers to expedite deployment and foster competition.

- ✓ The film and production industry continues to grow in Westchester County. Despite industry-wide challenges over the past few years, including tighter production timelines, leaner budgets, and heightened competition, film production generated \$924.2 million in economic activity, 3,103 jobs, and \$261.6 million in wages in 2024.
- ✓ The BCW also continues to support the hospitality and tourism industry. Westchester business and leisure visitor spending reached \$2.4 billion in 2024, a 7.8% year-over-year growth. The county generated the most tourism-related jobs in the Hudson Valley, creating 22,066 jobs and \$1.34 billion in local wages. It is imperative that New York State continues to support this industry, which has proven to generate revenue for municipalities and, in many cases, has served as an incubator for workforce development. In 2026, the BCW will be working with the Westchester Hotel Association to:
- ✓ Support legislation to end the 30-day Permanent Resident Law's applicability to hotels. In New York State, if a person does not check out of their hotel room after 30 days, they are considered a "resident" and is given all the protections residents of rental properties receive. As a result, there are unscrupulous individuals who target hotels. They check in and then stop paying their bills after 30 days because they know they will now be considered a "resident" and can only be removed via a lengthy and costly eviction process. Hotels, that are now forced to initiate this

process, are faced with a process that can take well over a year to evict someone, and in the process, they lose hundreds of thousands of dollars on legal fees, loss of revenue from room occupancy, and the cost to repair damage to the room.

- ✓ Support Americans with Disabilities Act website legislation (S.3237/A.6898) to address the lawsuits that have plagued the hospitality industry in recent years, as there is no federal regulation that specifies what qualifies a website or mobile application to be compliant. The vague nature of the existing guidance leaves an entire industry vulnerable to these lawsuits. This legislation would provide businesses with an opportunity to correct any alleged violation prior to the commencement of an action.
- ✓ Support adequate funding for Tourism Promotion Matching Funds to provide much-needed support for tourism promotion agencies.
- ✓ Oppose legislation (S.3871/A.392) that requires employers of retail, food service and cleaning employees to give them 7-days notice of their work schedule, and a month's notice of the minimum hours of work they will be assigned. This is not practical in the hospitality industry which is constantly evolving on a day-to-day basis and is subject to circumstances of which they have no control.
- ✓ Oppose legislation (S.5526) that states that an employer may not schedule or require an employee to work during rest periods defined as the first ten hours following the end of the previous calendar day's work shift or on-call shift, or the first ten hours following the end of a work shift or on-call shift that spanned

two calendar days. This bill would effectively tie the hands of the hotel industry where many employees prefer the convenience of back-to-back shifts.

EMPIRE CITY CASINO BY MGM RESORTS

Ensuring Fair Competition, Workforce Stability, and Economic Sustainability in New York's Gaming Landscape

New York's gaming landscape continues to evolve rapidly, with expanded competition across the region and new policy decisions reshaping the market. As these changes unfold, it is essential that Empire City Casino by MGM Resorts, a long-standing, high-impact employer, is afforded the opportunity to compete on equal and equitable footing so it can continue delivering jobs, tax revenue, and economic stability to the communities that depend on it.

Empire City Casino by MGM Resorts is one of the largest private employers in Yonkers, New York's third-largest city, supporting thousands of workers and their families through family-sustaining, union jobs that rank among the highest-paid positions in the gaming industry nationwide. The facility also generates more than \$300 million annually for the state education fund, and tens of millions of dollars each year for the city of Yonkers. This is critical funding that Yonkers, Westchester County, and New York State rely upon.



Beyond its role as a gaming facility, Empire City is responsible for the operation and funding of Yonkers Raceway, one of the nation's most historic harness racing venues. Maintaining this racetrack is not only a cultural and sporting obligation, but also a significant financial responsibility that Empire City continues to shoulder as a steward of this legacy asset. Each year, Empire City Casino generates hundreds of millions of dollars that directly support the sport of harness racing, and the broader agricultural and racing economy tied to it.

As competition increases across New York and neighboring states, Empire City currently operates under a tax structure that places it at a competitive disadvantage relative to other Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) gaming entities across the state. This imbalance threatens the long-term sustainability of a facility that has consistently delivered for New York, through jobs, tax revenue, and economic activity, while absorbing higher operating costs and obligations than its peers.

Empire City's ability to remain viable is directly tied to tax parity and regulatory fairness. Without a level playing field, the continued operation of the facility, along with the jobs and revenue it supports, becomes increasingly challenging in a market that is otherwise expanding and modernizing.

MGM Resorts has invested over \$1 billion in Empire City with more investments on the way, and remains committed to responsible operations, workforce excellence, and community partnerships in Yonkers and Westchester County. To protect these investments and the thousands of livelihoods connected to them, New York

State policymakers must ensure that legacy operators like Empire City are not left behind as the gaming market grows more competitive.

The BCW urges state leaders to prioritize policies that:

- ✔ Promote tax parity among VLT and Class III gaming facilities
- ✔ Preserve and protect existing high-quality jobs
- ✔ Sustain critical revenue streams for education and local government
- ✔ Ensure that long-standing employers can compete fairly in New York's evolving gaming environment

Empire City Casino has been a reliable economic engine for Yonkers and Westchester County for decades. With thoughtful, equitable policy decisions, it can continue to play that role, supporting workers, funding public priorities, and contributing to New York's long-term economic strength. Its decline is not something New York State, Westchester, or Yonkers can afford to risk.

HOUSING

The need to address the state-wide housing shortage and create programs to increase affordability continues to be a top priority in 2026. The BCW will continue to play a leadership role through its Smart Development Working Group, and we are happy to once again provide the Governor and the Legislature with the expertise of our members who have a proven track record of getting things done in the housing arena.

In 2026, the BCW will:

- ✔ Support the Governor's proposed additional \$250 million in capital funding to accelerate the construction of thousands of new affordable homes.
- ✔ Continue to advocate that the creation of more housing will not move forward if additional requirements and burdens are placed upon projects. Market conditions have changed, and the world of today is vastly different than the world of 2019. The development of new market rate housing is now incredibly challenging due to inflation and elevated interest rates. Recognizing the urgent need to create more housing supply to ensure affordability and maintain the competitiveness of Westchester County, the BCW worked with its Smart Development Working Group and shared a report with the Legislature that compared the development costs of a multifamily project in 2019 to the development costs of today. We will again utilize this report to urge state and county government to lessen mandates and burdens in order to create more desperately-needed housing.
- ✔ Advocate for legislation (S.256) to formally authorize IDAs to support the state's housing goals. Over the past five years, IDAs have supported over 400 projects with a residential component, creating over 36,000 new units and more than 9,000 affordable housing units. While IDAs have the authority to support commercial housing projects based on

court precedent and a 2015 Office of the State Comptroller opinion, many IDAs are still hesitant to support housing projects because the current database does not track housing starts, and only quantifies jobs created/retained vs. tax dollars abated. To help solve the state's housing crisis, the state must formally clarify the authority of IDAs to engage in the development of housing projects. In addition to short-term construction jobs, new multifamily housing creates permanent service-sector jobs and increased economic activity.

- ✔ Support legislation (S.5194/A.3446) to require each city, town and village to develop a Housing Action Plan for everyone that is specific to its local needs by taking into account its unique conditions and characteristics. These factors should include, but are not limited to, infrastructure, available land for development, buildings that can be repurposed, and an assessment of community needs. The legislation would require each locale to generate a statement that sets out its priorities for how it intends to be part of the solution in addressing the housing shortage, including promoting affordability by reducing barriers to new housing supply. Localities would benefit from knowing their housing needs, and planning for the construction and preservation of the housing types that must be created to meet those needs. While the legislation does not mandate a Housing Action Plan be enacted, it does mandate it be completed in good faith.

- ✔ Oppose any legislation that would increase state or local mortgage recording taxes or real estate transfer taxes.



Increasing real estate transaction taxes simply robs equity from homebuyers who could better use such funds towards a down payment. New York State already has some of the highest closing costs and real estate taxes in the country, and individuals and businesses are choosing to leave the state due to over-taxation. In order to reverse this trend, New York should be advancing policies that make home buying more affordable.

ENERGY

The BCW formed the Clean Energy Action Coalition (CEAC) to accelerate clean energy adoption across Westchester County.

The CEAC includes more than 120 BCW members who are leaders in the renewal energy sectors, as well as local government leaders, professional planners, builders, engineers and landscape architects, land use attorneys, not-for-profits, and other businesses.

The CEAC is engaging decision-makers on the state, county and municipal levels, prioritizing outreach and education, creating uniform standards that can expedite clean energy development, and building a central case study resource that can help stakeholders review and pursue the financial incentives that are already available.

Westchester is in critical need of additional energy sources due to the elimination of 2,000 megawatts (MW) of electricity from the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant; the increased electricity demand from economic growth, data centers and AI; as well as the move to electric vehicles and heat pumps.

Therefore, the CEAC advocates that Westchester:



BCW 2025 Energy Conference

- 1 Dramatically increase solar photovoltaic installations everywhere feasible, as soon as possible;
- 2 Expedite the siting of safe, proven battery storage systems; and
- 3 Use renewable biofuels to immediately reduce particulate and carbon emissions, while systematically transitioning to electric heat pumps and vehicles.

The CEAC urges all municipalities to plan, expedite, and implement clean energy transformations that increase clean distributed electricity generation, efficient heating and cooling systems, and low carbon transportation.

The CEAC supports:

Increased incentives for distributed solar and battery storage, both on-site and in the community. Incentives should include grants, expedited permit approvals, and tax reductions, with clear, increasing amounts for projects that meet higher levels of on-site and community-based clean energy generation. The CEAC supports the passage of legislation (S.6570/A.8758), to enact the **Accelerate Solar for Affordable Power (ASAP)** act to set a new target for distributed solar energy capacity, and direct the public service commission to advance reforms to the utility interconnection process to ensure timely and cost-effective integration of new distributed energy resources.

Incentivizing innovative solutions that reduce the amount of energy required to heat, cool, and provide hot water for our homes, schools and workplaces. These solutions include additional geothermal incentives and support for hybrid renewable biofuel-electric HVAC heat pumps and hot water systems – along with integrated, programmable utility-program demand reduction controls. Incentives should include grants, expedited approvals, and tax reductions – with simple and clear determinations of goals, and increased incentive amounts for attaining higher percentages of emission reductions.

Moving to renewable biofuels as direct “drop-in” replacements for the 100,000 Westchester buildings that heat with oil, and as a substitute for diesel in our transportation systems. Renewable diesel is a liquid biofuel that is chemically identical to petroleum diesel. It can be used as a substitute for – or blended with – petroleum diesel. Renewable diesel is made from fats and oils, such as soybean or canola oil. It can be produced at existing petroleum refineries that are retrofitted to make biofuels. Over 100,000 Westchester buildings heat with oil, and tens of thousands of diesel trucks and buses release massive amounts of harmful emissions and carbon.

Renewable diesel is a liquid fuel produced from non-petroleum renewable sources – specifically, vegetable oils and animal fats. The chemical and structural properties of renewable diesel are the same as petroleum-derived (conventional) diesel, and renewable diesel meets the federal registration requirements for fuels and fuel additives, and the ASTM D975-21 Standard Specification for Diesel Fuel. Therefore, **renewable diesel can be used as a direct substitute for conventional diesel** (up to 100% or R100). Blends of renewable diesel and conventional diesel are labeled with an “R,” followed by the percentage (by volume) of the renewable diesel content.

Since the transition from liquid fuels for heating and transportation will take time under any scenario, the **BCW urges the county and municipal governments to purchase and mandate renewable liquid fuels for heating oil and diesel transportation**, while providing increased incentives for projects as they increase the percentage of zero emission energy. One incentive would be for the IDAs to expand new construction/redevelopment incentives for projects that incorporate clean energy systems.

President and CEO of NYSERDA Doreen Harris and County Executive Ken Jenkins join BCW President & CEO Marsha Gordon, BCW Executive Vice President/COO John Ravitz and Ron Kamen, the Director of BCW’s Clean Action Coalition, at the 2025 BCW Energy Conference.





Renewable Diesel

The BCW supports legislation (S.2411) relating to bioheating fuel requirements that allows B100 or B99 biofuel and R100 or R99 renewable fuel to be used to blend with or replace fossil heating oil to create bioheating fuel. This legislation should be passed to correct the current blending law, which fails to include renewable diesel.

The NYS Department of State is engaged in a rulemaking related to the new construction ban. **The BCW urges the DOS to recognize the use of B100 and R100 certified heating appliances as being permissible under the law wherever the local electric grid cannot support new building electrification infrastructure.** Since the equipment enables the burning of non-fossil fuels, they should be permitted to be installed in new construction. By allowing renewable biofuels to be used, electric capacity will be freed up for other electric HVAC and transportation transformations.

Clean Fuel Standard

The BCW supports legislation (S.1343-A/A.472A) to establish the clean fuel standard to reduce carbon intensity from the on-road transportation sector by 20% by 2032. The legislation aims to replicate California's successful transition from fossil diesel to renewable diesel, with 75% of CA's diesel transportation now from renewable diesel.



Development of Battery Electric Storage Systems

The BCW supports the vital development of Battery Electric Storage Systems in Westchester County. As we move to a power system that is more reliant on renewable energy sources, new battery investments are necessary to maintain grid reliability and to ensure the ability to meet the demand for power at all times.

Develop and Construct New Electric Car Infrastructure

Of the total greenhouse gas emissions in New York City, 24% comes from vehicles – yet of 10.8 million registered vehicles in our state, only about 45,000 run on alternative fuels. New York State needs to provide more electric car infrastructure – such as more charging stations along major highways and at transportation hubs – to encourage more drivers to purchase electric vehicles.

Adopt uniform municipal standards to expedite clean energy implementation

Additionally, the CEAC urges Westchester County and municipalities to quickly adopt reasonable, responsible GHG reduction plans that identify preferred locations and streamline the development of solar, battery storage, geothermal HVAC, electric vehicle Level 2, and direct current fast-charging stations.

The CEAC is advocating that existing model municipal laws with uniform standards for new, retrofit, and existing buildings be replicated to provide “open door” expedited approvals via “form-based” codes, as well as educational programs for developers/ investors.

Support new electric transmission

Since there will always be a need for more energy than can be generated by local distributed sources, the BCW also urges the county and all local municipalities to support the construction of new transmission lines from upstate renewable energy sources, including both the Clean Path and Propel NY transmission projects.

Fuel Switching II

The BCW supports the “bucks for boilers act” which creates a program to transition housing units from oil and propane to electric heat pumps and other high energy efficiency upgrades. The BCW also advocates for the inclusion of a switch to biofuels.

The New York State Renewable Reclamation Projects Program

The BCW supports legislation (S.1554) to establish the New York State Renewable Reclamation Projects Program for the development of renewable electric generation projects, as New York State’s goal to generate 50% of its electricity from renewables by 2030 requires a momentous effort.

Support for Renewable Energy Generating Projects

The BCW supports legislation (S.270) to allow certain renewable energy generating projects, that are located above real property currently used for vehicle parking, to bypass the parkland alienation process. This bill

will assist the county in implementing innovative energy projects to help meet the ambitious goals of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

Reform the All-Electric Building Act

The state enacted a prohibition on the use of fossil fuel equipment and systems in new building construction that commenced on 12/31/25 for buildings seven stories in height or less, and will start on 1/31/28 for all remaining new construction. The BCW is most concerned about reliability issues and costs. The CLCPA continues to move forward and has set ambitious targets for the state to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. However, since we do not yet have the renewable energy infrastructure in place to meet reliability concerns, we are urging a more flexible and development-friendly approach.

Reform the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process

The BCW thanks the Governor for including SEQR reform in her FY 2027 budget. These regulations cause unnecessary delays for important projects throughout the state, and is especially needed now as we move to build sustainable energy infrastructure. Delays cause local municipalities to, at times, abandon economic development projects, which then prevents new jobs and revenue from being generated. It is clear that the SEQR process has been used to cause serious delays in getting Westchester projects completed in a timely manner. As the county’s energy landscape changes and Westchester looks to build solid renewable energy infrastructure, communities must not use SEQR to delay these projects. If that happens, the county will face reliability issues.

Authorize energy storage permitting under the office of renewable energy siting and electric transmission

The BCW supports legislation (A.8378/S.5506) to add 25+Megawatt Battery Energy Storage (BESS) systems to be a covered project subject to the ORES approval process.

Enact the Community Solar Opportunity and Local Approval Reform (Community SOLAR) act

The BCW supports legislation (S.8119-A/A.9087) to authorize municipalities to establish standards for distributed generation energy facilities.

Support legislation (S.8536/A.9064) to prohibit electric corporations and gas corporations from increasing charges to ratepayers for increased costs incurred due to the building or operation of a data center, except to those ratepayers involved with or associated with the building or operation of such data center or semiconductor fabrication plant.

Enact the **State and Local Clean Energy Partnership** (S.5386/A.3585), directing the public service commission to establish a standard New York State community choice aggregation program for all utility service territories.

Support legislation (S.1668/A.7060) to authorize the New York State energy research and development authority to administer a program to provide grants or loans for the costs related to **enabling switching residences with propane or fuel-oil heating systems to efficient electric heat pumps.**

ENVIRONMENT

On the environmental front, the BCW looks forward to collaborating with the Governor, the Legislature and local governments via the BCW's **Clean Energy Action Coalition.**

In 2026:

- ✓ The BCW supports the Governor's budget proposal to allocate \$425 million for the Environmental Protection Fund that provides funding for critical environmental programs such as land acquisition, farmland protection, invasive species prevention and eradication, enhanced recreational access, water quality improvement, and an aggressive environmental justice agenda.
- ✓ The BCW, as a member of the statewide Clean Water Jobs Creation Coalition, supports the Governor's \$3.75 billion five-year commitment to enhancing clean water infrastructure that will ensure access to clean drinking water and allow municipalities to invest in efficient and effective wastewater treatment strategies.
- ✓ The BCW opposes legislation (S.5684/A.6543) that seeks to expand the bottle deposit law by expanding the types of beverages that would be included; by increasing the bottle deposit amount to ten cents per container; and by having the per container handling fee paid by a deposit initiator to a deposit redeemer from 3.5 to 6 cents per container. The



BCW is concerned that the increase in the volume of redemptions will significantly increase the compliance burden placed on the retail sector.

- ✓ While the BCW opposes the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (S.1464/A.1749) that would restrict the sale of plastic packaging and one-use products, and require source reductions of all packaging types, the BCW supports the Affordable Waste Reduction Act (S.5062/A.6191) which is modeled on recently adopted Minnesota legislation, and informed by programs adopted in other states. It creates a more workable approach to increasing the recovery and reuse of post-consumer packaging and paper products by reducing, and decreasing the disposal of such materials, which will result in significant environmental and waste management benefits to New York State.

TRANSPORTATION

The BCW advocates that the state needs to prioritize where critical and limited transportation funds go, as a modern and well-maintained transportation network is vital to the state's economy. **It is especially important that Westchester County has a strong, fiscally sound transportation network** to serve as an important economic development tool for recruiting and retaining businesses in the county. This is essential in efforts to relieve congestion, improve road, bridge and transit conditions, boost safety, and support long-term economic growth in New York.

The BCW joins the Associated General Contractors of New York State and other infrastructure coalition partners – including



40 organizations from the construction industry, business, organized labor, local governments, and minority and women-owned businesses – in advocating for an additional \$950 million in the FY 2027 budget for the State Department of Transportation (SDOT) capital program.

Investing in roads and bridges makes traveling more affordable for motorists and businesses by saving them money on repairs, fuel, and time, while improving traffic safety. Current SDOT road and bridge conditions data demonstrates that our transportation system continues to worsen at alarming rates. New York ranks 45th nationally for the percentage of major roadway pavements in good condition – a 30% decline over the past five years. These roadways carry essential mobility and freight traffic, critical to the state's economy. New York ranks 46th nationally for share of deficient bridges.

According to the Federal Highway Administration, 27% (4,431) of the state's bridges show significant deterioration in key structural components such as decks and supports. Additionally, a recent report issued by TRIP, a national research nonprofit, reports that roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested, or lack some desirable safety features cost New York motorists a total of \$40.3 billion statewide annually – up to \$3,755 per driver in some urban areas – due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes, and congestion-related delays.

These findings underscore the urgent need for increased investment in transportation infrastructure. An additional \$950 million in the budget for SDOT's core capital program is a necessary step to help reverse these trends. We must make fiscally prudent infrastructure investments that benefit all New Yorkers, and continue to annually reevaluate road and bridge conditions.

Without an infusion of additional resources, much-needed projects will fall out of the SDOT capital plan because of the significant and cumulative impact of inflation and cost escalation. This will accelerate the already precipitous decline in the condition of New York's roads and bridges which poses a serious risk to public safety and the state's economic competitiveness.

CHILD CARE

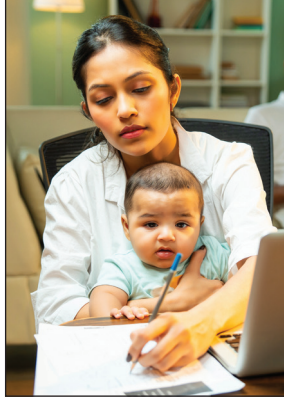
Working with the Child Care Council of Westchester, the BCW has been a constant proponent of ensuring that child care is a priority on all levels of government. **Working parents, particularly women, depend on the availability of affordable, quality child care in order to work**, and the BCW has continually stressed the importance of it as an economic development tool. In 2026, the BCW will continue to strive for universal access to affordable, high-quality child care so every child can achieve their dreams and potential, and every parent can work and advance in their careers, and our community can sustain a skilled and productive workforce.

To this end, the BCW supports the Governor's FY 2027 commitment to laying the groundwork to achieve this, including her proposed \$4.5 billion total statewide

for child care and Pre-K services, including \$1.7 billion in new investments; over \$3.2 billion in childcare vouchers to address waitlists; and efforts to enhance and reform the Child and Dependent Care Credit, providing 230,000 filers with an average increase in benefit of \$576. The BCW looks forward to seeing how the state will work with Westchester County to expand child care services.

This assistance is urgently needed, as the cost of child care for families and low wages for child care workers continues to be problematic in Westchester County. Furthermore, Westchester does not have a lack of "slots," but a lack of enough child care workers to staff to full capacity. In addition to this, the New York State Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) for low-income families had a 30% increase in demand in Westchester in 2024-25; and the Westchester Works Scholarship program maxed out the allocated funding in 2024-25. These data points underscore the need for continued investment.

The BCW also advocates for the establishment of a New York State sustained Child Care Workforce Compensation Fund to increase pay to providers who serve Child Care Assistance Program families; continued funding from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to bring more home-based programs into Family Child Care Networks for business-related services; and continued funding from OCFS for quality initiatives that address mental health and behavioral issues in early childhood settings.



HEALTHCARE

Healthcare workforce shortages continue to grow in virtually every county in New York State. The nursing shortage in New York State and across the country is well documented, and we continue to see many healthcare professionals leaving their respective fields due to retirement, burnout or the pursuit of other careers. The shortage is expected to intensify as baby boomers age and the need for healthcare grows. According to a report by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, U.S. nursing schools turned away 65,766 qualified applications from baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs in 2023 due to an insufficient number of clinical preceptors, as well as insufficient faculty and clinical sites.

The BCW has advocated for the Clinical Preceptor Tax Credit Act since 2017. This bill (S.7701/A.6460) would establish a personal income tax credit for community-based healthcare professionals such as nurses and physician assistants, among others, who serve as preceptors, providing New York State-required clinical training for students studying to enter various healthcare professions. Currently, schools need to cap their incoming classes as they only have a limited number of slots based on the number of preceptors they have available. Thus, many prospective students are not able to enter into healthcare programs. In effect, this bill seeks to incentivize community-based healthcare professionals to serve as preceptors so that students can complete their state-mandated clinical training. Five states have already enacted similar legislation, and another five states have comparable proposals pending. Now is the time for New York State to pass this much-needed legislation.

Additionally, in 2026 the BCW will:

- ✓ Work to protect our healthcare system in light of potential negative impacts proposed by the new federal administration. Specifically, assuring the implementation of science-based public health policies related to vaccines and other public health measures, as well as strong protections for women's health issues.
 - ✓ Continue to adamantly oppose any attempt to create a single-payer health insurance system in New York State, including the New York Health Program (S.3425/A.1466). The cost to implement this program has already been well documented, and New York simply cannot afford this.
- The increase to future New York State budgets would be catastrophic. New York cannot afford, and should



not tear down, its existing healthcare system that has already enrolled over 4.9 million New Yorkers in the past few years. Due to the implementation of the New York Health Exchange, New York currently covers 95% of its residents under a combination of private and public health plans. The New York Health Program would result in the largest state tax increase in U.S. history. Instead, the Legislature and Governor should work to improve the New York Health Exchange so that those New Yorkers who have not yet enrolled in the program have

the opportunity to identify and select a healthcare plan that will work for themselves and their families.

- ✓ Continue to oppose the New York Health Information Privacy Act that was vetoed last year. While the BCW supports the underlying intent of this legislation, and supports the passage of reasonable consumer health data privacy laws that protect consumers in meaningful ways, we firmly believe it must be done in a way that does not disrupt a business's ability to improve consumer access to services and products. The bill's challenging substantive obligations far exceed what any company could implement, and will disrupt consumer experiences with any products or services that are remotely related to, or could infer health or wellness. The adoption of a health data privacy bill should be composed with business to ensure the most comprehensive and thoughtful outcome. Yet, this bill fails to incorporate stakeholders' significant concerns and is rife with unintended consequences for businesses and consumers alike. It will create significant confusion, costs, and unnecessary consequences for both consumers and businesses.
- ✓ Continue to educate the business community on all aspects of the New York Health Exchange, including what tax credits are available for employers who offer health insurance to their employees.
- ✓ Continue to advocate for the adoption of strong transparency regulations for the Department of Financial Services that sets the rates for the health insurance plans under the Health Exchange.

- ✓ Support the enactment of medical liability tort reform to rein in the costs of medical malpractice insurance.
- ✓ Support legislation that effectively addresses the rising costs of prescription drugs without price controls.

MENTAL HEALTH

The BCW joins Greater Mental Health of New York in supporting the Governor's FY 2027 Executive Budget proposal for a 12.5% increase (\$680 million) in Office of Mental Health (OMH) funding; minimum wage increases for OMH and the Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) up from \$6.38 million in FY 2026; and increased funding by approximately \$40 million from FY 2026 for the Community Treatment Services Program.

Additionally, the BCW joins Greater Mental Health of New York in advocating for the following priorities in 2026:

- ✓ Require all insurers to comply with Part AA – New York's new commercial rate mandate in the Article VII Health/Mental Hygiene section of the FY 2025 budget to increase and expedite enforcements against non-compliant commercial insurers.
- ✓ Provide a 2.7% targeted inflationary increase for Oasas and OMH providers' rates and contracts in the FY 2027 State Budget. The 2.7% represents the total of the current inflationary increase of



2.7% (CPI July, 2025). This is important to address behavioral health and workforce retention, to address significant and persistent job vacancies and workforce shortages in mental health, and substance use disorder programs across the state.

- ✓ Increase access to care throughout the New York State public mental health hygiene system. Carve out the Office of Mental Health and the Office of Addiction Services and Supports mental health and substance use disorder outpatient, residential, and rehabilitation services from the state's Medicaid managed care program.
- ✓ Expand the Certified Community Behavioral Health Center Program to permit any eligible provider to offer these services at the agency-based Medicaid cost-based Prospective Payment System rate. Expand the range of mental health and substance use disorder services available to children, youth and families with commercial benefits. Prohibit retroactive prior authorization denials, and retroactive audits that result in recoupments for services dating back beyond one year.

EDUCATION

Preparing New York State's students to acquire the skills needed to attend college and/or to prepare them to enter the workforce, continues to be a top priority for the BCW. We must never lose sight of what the ultimate goals are, which include: **better graduation rates, college matriculation and completion rates, career placement, family-sustaining wages, and greater civic engagement.**



In 2026, the BCW joins the Lower Hudson Education Coalition in advocating for:

Funding our Public Schools:

- ✓ Direct SED to complete district-specific modeling of the Rockefeller Institute's recommendations and establish a permanent Foundation Aid Review Commission to regularly reevaluate cost drivers, student needs, and regional factors to make recommendations to the Executive and the Legislature.
- ✓ Maintain the "save harmless" policy and protect expense-based aids to avoid fiscal disruption.
- ✓ Modernize the Property Tax Cap to reflect the real costs of educating students, to provide flexibility for expenditures that are out of the districts' hands, to address enrollment growth, and mandate-related and increasing fixed costs, and to allow unutilized levies to be deferred to the next year. Ensure public school support remains strong by declining to participate in the OBBBA voucher program.

Investing in Students and Staff:

- ✓ Create an expense-driven aid stream for school-based mental health services and partnerships with community providers.
- ✓ Provide flexible funding for school safety, including staffing, infrastructure, and cybersecurity.
- ✓ Reinststate a statewide Mandate Relief Redesign Team and ensure transparency

through fiscal impact statements for all new mandates. All new mandates should be fully funded.

Preparing for the Future:

- ✓ Fund capital improvements to enhance climate resiliency, energy efficiency, and indoor environmental quality.
- ✓ Fully fund all costs associated with the EV bus transition, including charging infrastructure, hybrid options, and service contracts. Support A9187 to defer implementation of the EV bus requirement.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The BCW is proud that all colleges in Westchester County are members of our organization, and we support them as they educate and train our future employees.

An educated workforce is critical to 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.

The BCW urges the Legislature to improve the state's successful Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), which is in its 51st year, by streamlining its processing for better access and user experience by permitting graduate students to participate in TAP, increasing the number of semesters for TAP eligibility and making the program available in the summer and winter sessions. The BCW also urges the Legislature to eliminate the disparity in access to TAP awards by standardizing dependent and independent student TAP award schedules.

The BCW also supports the creation of a new College High School Program to support dual enrollment models, making higher education more accessible and affordable.

The Legislature must also modify the Enhanced Tuition Awards Program to attract additional participants by removing government-imposed caps on tuition charges, and residency and employment requirements. The Legislature must also restore the FY 2025 cut to the Bundy Aid Program, a successful program that helps make college more affordable, and the Higher Education Capital Matching Grant Program, which creates jobs while simultaneously helping schools to modernize and enhance their facilities.

Additionally, the BCW urges the Legislature to extend the proposed New York Opportunity Promise Scholarship to students (ages 25-55) attending not-for-profit colleges who pursue degrees in high-demand fields. These students would be eligible for the same level of scholarship funding that they would have received had they elected to attend community college.

Lastly, the BCW supports the inclusion of all degree-granting colleges and universities in Early College High School and P-TECH Programs, including the proprietary sector and opposes legislation (S.1419/A.898) that would allow for the repeal or alteration of real property exemptions for not-for-profit colleges, as this sets a very dangerous precedent that colleges cannot afford.



FEDERAL

The BCW thanks Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Congressmen Lawler and Latimer who continue to work tirelessly to ensure that New York State receives the necessary federal dollars that are needed to fund countless programs and projects that are important to Westchester County and the rest of the state. As these monies are allocated, it is critical that the New York delegation works to ensure that New York gets its fair share to **grow its economy, create new jobs and recruit and retain businesses and residents.**

Needless to say, there remains a great deal of partisan friction in Washington, D.C. The BCW is hopeful that members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and the Trump administration, will recognize that there is still much work to be done and come together to enact bipartisan legislation that will positively impact Westchester residents and businesses.

Last year, the BCW visited Washington, D.C. for a two-day trip to meet with members of the Westchester Congressional delegation and to receive a briefing from the leadership at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

In 2026, the BCW will advocate for work to be done in the following areas:

- ✓ The BCW has consistently urged Congress to adopt common-sense tax reform to simplify the process and lower rates for businesses and individuals. The federal government must look at ways to alleviate tax and regulatory burdens that have been placed on the backs of businesses of all sizes.

- ✓ The BCW urges Congress to implement a modernized permitting process to reduce delays and cut costs for infrastructure development.
- ✓ The BCW will continue to have a strong line of communication with our members regarding concerns and impacts that the Trump administration's tariff policies are having on their day-to-day operations and relay that information to our congressional delegation members.



- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Westchester County is home to more than a dozen colleges and universities who admit students who take advantage of financial aid provided by New York State and the federal government that, along with generous institutional aid, makes earning a degree more accessible. The BCW applauds the United States Senate and House of Representatives on historic and record-setting investments made to the Pell Grant program in the 118th Congress, and urges members of Westchester's Congressional delegation

to continue prioritizing the Pell Grant program, raising the maximum individual award to \$13,000 to ensure that America's college students continue to have access to a college education that will drive their successful futures, and keep our country innovative, competitive and economically thriving.

- ✓ The BCW joins Feeding Westchester in supporting the nation's charitable food system by increasing funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) in response to the unprecedented demand for hunger relief. Additionally, the BCW and Feeding Westchester advocate for the strengthening of federal nutrition programs, including enhancing the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to allow SNAP participants to purchase hot foods and prepared meals with their benefits; support the Local Farmers Feeding our Communities Act which would boost the purchasing and distribution of local food; and lastly, urge for investment in the health and well-being of our communities by guaranteeing school breakfast, lunch, after-school and summer meals for all children nationwide, and provide adequate funding to ensure all eligible households can participate in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).
- ✓ The BCW urges for the passage of the federal Child Care Modernization Act to update and reauthorize the Child Care and Development Block Grant to increase the supply and affordability of child care, fairly compensate providers, and improve child care services for families across the country.



BCW Executive Vice President/COO John Ravitz moderated the KeyBank Leadership Series Congressional Forum with Congressman George Latimer and Congressman Mike Lawler.

- ✓ The BCW urges for substantial increases in investments in child care, Pre-K and Head Start that is much needed to build and sustain a professional workforce and provide high-quality early learning opportunities for all children. The U.S. must create a child care system comparable to those in virtually every other developed nation. These reforms will ensure families can access the child care they need, employers can avoid workforce disruptions, and states can sustain and build upon recent improvements.
- ✓ The federal government remains uniquely positioned to provide additional resources to address mental health disparities in Westchester County that would benefit our workplaces, schools and the greater community. The BCW supports any initiative that focuses on supporting the mental health, well-being and efficacy of employees in our workplaces, students in our schools, members of the larger community, and initiatives to support and expand the behavioral health workforce.
- ✓ The debate over comprehensive immigration reform is ongoing. The BCW advocates for politics to not get in the way of common-sense policy, and urges the federal government to focus on reforms that protect our country's security while not losing sight of the

important role that immigrants have had, and continue to have, in creating economic prosperity for our country.

- ✓ The BCW supports investing in federal R&D programs that help businesses develop new technologies that then create new private sector jobs. Many of Westchester's colleges and universities engage in federally funded research. It is essential that Congress continue to appropriate funds that would enable institutions of higher education to engage in basic and applied research, which spurs innovation and stimulates the economy.
- ✓ The BCW supports the National Quantum Initiative Reauthorization Act to ensure that the United States maintains its lead in quantum innovation. Our nation's success will depend on strong coordination across research, workforce development, and public-private partnerships. The BCW urges Congress to act swiftly to strengthen the National Quantum Initiative to accelerate the real-world benefits of quantum computing – from drug discovery and materials, to making our critical infrastructure more resilient.
- ✓ The BCW supports a federal framework for Artificial Intelligence (AI) that provides uniform guidance, encourages innovation, and ensures that all residents are protected. Consistent with that framework, the BCW supports efforts to responsibly harness the opportunities from AI for state government use. The BCW also supports state efforts to establish public-private partnerships that promote upskilling and investing

WABC Radio Host Dominick Carter and Annie Norbitz, Vice President, Research, Global Strategy Group, gave an overview on the 2025 elections and a preview of the 2026 mid-term elections at the BCW's final 2025 Political Leadership Series event.

in AI-related workforce programs and efforts to enhance research and educational developments relating to AI.

- ✓ The BCW shares Governor Hochul's belief that AI will play a significant role in every business sector. The recognition of AI's transformative potential aligns with the BCW's commitment to technological innovation. In 2024, the BCW will be introducing a yearlong series entitled "AI Alliance 360" which will be devoted to helping the business community prepare for the opportunities that await in this latest technical evolution.

In 2026, on the AI front, the BCW urges Congress and the Administration to:

- ✓ Ensure federal AI funding is accessible to Westchester's research institutions, school districts, colleges, healthcare networks, and employers.
- ✓ Expand federal support for small and mid-sized businesses seeking to integrate AI tools that improve productivity, safety, and competitiveness.
- ✓ Increase funding for AI-related workforce development, apprenticeships, and mid-career upskilling programs.
- ✓ Strengthen federal-state coordination to expand access to high-performance computing, secure data infrastructure, and cybersecurity capacity necessary for AI research and adoption.



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