



Press Release

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*from the office of the
Nassau County Legislature*

For immediate release:

October 29, 2008

Legislative Majority Approves 2009 Budget with Major Additional Cuts

Citing the most severe economic conditions in the past 20 years, the Nassau County Legislature Majority has approved an amended County budget for 2009. The amended budget includes significant cuts to essentially every County service.

Presiding Officer Diane Yatauro (D-Glen Cove) said, "This was perhaps the hardest decision I have had to make. These additional cutbacks, beyond what the administration first proposed, will affect many people. It is the last thing we, in the Legislature, wanted to do. However, the economic reality of the last 8 weeks has made these cutbacks necessary."

The Legislature worked with all the County Departments in an effort to make the most reasonable reductions. "I want to thank County Executive Tom Suozzi for his invaluable assistance in this process. His staff worked with our staff around the clock for weeks to bring this budget to fruition," said Presiding Officer Yatauro.

In response to the fiscal impact of the Wall Street crisis, the Legislature's Democratic Majority has adopted a budget with additional, substantial cuts to virtually every department and to numerous programs. Some of the largest cuts were made to the following areas:

- **Salary Raises**—there will be no budgeted salary increases for the approximately 700 non-union employees throughout the County. This includes employees at the County Legislature, the County Executive's Office, the County Clerk's Office, the District Attorney's Office, the County Comptroller's Office and the County Assessment Office.
- **School Crossing Guards**—this budgeted line will receive a \$1 million reduction. There will be **no** layoffs or reductions in benefits. School crossing guards will continue to be positioned at

every location which is currently staffed. They will be compensated only for time spent assisting schoolchildren at road crossings.

- Voluntary four-day workweek—by adopting a voluntary four-day workweek initiative, the County hopes to attract 100 of their 8,500 member workforce to opt into this program. This will result in \$1 million in savings.
- Position vacancies—the County plans on not replacing 200 employees who leave County service. This translates into a \$7.5 million savings and brings us closer to the goal of streamlining the size of County government.

In announcing the budget adoption, Presiding Officer Yatauro said, “The public should know this lengthy process of examining every County department line by line was painstakingly taken and intensely debated. The end result of all our analysis and discussion has positioned us close to \$30 million in additional savings for our taxpayers.”

Legislator Jeff Toback (D-Oceanside) said, “This was the toughest budget we have grappled with in the 8 years I have been here. The cuts may be painful for some but they are distributed fairly.”

Legislator Dave Mejias (D-Farmingdale) said, “As the economic crises grew larger by the day I made it very clear that I would not vote for this budget if there weren’t deeper cuts. I am glad we were able to agree on unprecedented cost savings.”

Legislator Judy Jacobs (D-Woodbury), the Budget Review Chairperson, said, “Difficult economic times require extremely difficult decisions to be made on a basis of fiscal integrity and honesty which is not compromised. I am proud to be part of a team that has done that to ensure that the County never returns to 1999 when it was on the brink of bankruptcy.”

Legislator Dave Denenberg (D-Merrick) said, “I am proud of this team of majority legislators. Every one of us knew we had to make difficult decisions given the economic crisis and we responded with a plan of across-the-board cuts and initiatives in an extremely fair and necessary manner while protecting essential services, public safety and those most vulnerable such as youth and seniors. Now is not the time to take credit or give blame; instead, the work of implementing the plan begins.”