

WCA joins in call to action

John Golden

Feb-19-10

Topics: [Government](#)



The Westchester County Association is spearheading a statewide call to action by business groups to hold election officials strictly accountable for uncontrolled government spending and at the polls.

WCA members are part of a Call to Action Committee that also includes members of the Long Island Association, National Federation of Independent Businesses and Unshackle Upstate, a Rochester-based business advocacy coalition. The Call to Action group represents more than 80 business organizations throughout the state, according to WCA officials.

WCA President William M. Mooney Jr. said the group, which plans a grassroots public education campaign timed for the November elections, recognized the political culture of state government must be changed to keep the state economically viable. "Mounting concerns about out-of-control spending at all levels of government that is forcing businesses to leave or consider leaving Westchester and New York state cannot be ignored," he said.

The committee agreed to a set of principles to hold elected officials accountable to control government spending. They are:

State spending must come down significantly.

New York's tax burden on individuals, families and businesses must be reduced significantly.

New York must live within its revenue each year without increasing taxes and fees.

New York must become more economically competitive with other states.

“Lawmakers no doubt will be held accountable if they deviate from these principles,” Mooney said.

The committee also announced plans to issue report cards grading lawmakers on their adherence to those principles. The report cards will be part of a campaign to educate business members and the public in advance of the November elections.

WCA Chairman Alfred B. DeBello said election results since last November, which included major upsets in Westchester County and in the Massachusetts special U.S. Senate election, “clearly indicate that a minor revolution is under way. There is no better opportunity than right now to let our elected officials know that the public is demanding a change in the way the business of government is conducted.”

The committee also issued guiding principles for the proposed 2010-2011 state budget that is projected to have an \$8 billion deficit and include \$1 billion in new taxes and fees. They are:

Consolidate both large and small government agencies and functions.

Identify ways to use state resources to stimulate private-sector job growth.

Declare a fiscal emergency and freeze salaries.

Reform the state budget process to instill more transparency and accountability into the process of spending taxpayers' money.

Change the structure of public-employee compensation and benefits to reflect economic realities.

Hold school aid and Medicaid spending flat.

WCA officials said Call to Action Committee members have committed to educate their fellow employees, neighbours, civic associations and others about those principles in an effort to create a massive mobilization campaign to educate the public.

WCA officials said the WCA and its partners welcome any interested group or individual to participate. Contact information is available at the WCA website at www.westchester.org.

