

DEPUTY PRESIDING OFFICER  
VIVIAN VILORIA-FISHER  
5<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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### *Legislative Short Takes*

Suffolk County became the first municipality in the nation to ban so-called “toxic baby bottles”. Resolution 154-2009, the Toxin Free Toddlers and Babies Act will make it unlawful to sell children’s beverage containers that contain the chemical Bisphenol A, commonly referred to as BPA.

As a synthetic estrogen, BPA has been linked to disruptions in human development and is suspected to contribute to such complications as an altered immune system, hyperactivity, reproductive health problems, increased risk of breast and prostate cancer, obesity, and diabetes.



A bill authorizing the creation of a Hate Crimes Task Force in Suffolk County has been adopted. The task force consisting of 13 members is about to begin examining the sources of racial tension, studying and analyzing the mechanisms used to report hate crimes and will provide recommendations on current hate crime legislation within Suffolk.

The bill, co-sponsored by Legislator Viloria-Fisher, was introduced after the murder of an Ecuadorian immigrant in Patchogue Village last November. Police have labeled that murder a hate crime and have charged seven teens in connection with the death.

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Dear Neighbor,

It has been said that the cornerstone of democracy is an informed citizenry. Over the past ten years I have used these “Community Reports” to keep you abreast of the actions that I am taking on your behalf to help shape this community and Suffolk County. While informing you, the community will remain a top priority for me, the manner in which I will be reaching out to you will be changing. This will be the last paper newsletter that will be produced and mailed out by my office. Just as the economic downturn has forced the residents of this district to make difficult choices, so too are your representatives making cuts, saving and rethinking how best to continue offering the services that you need and demand.

Even before I joined my Legislative colleagues in passing a bill to eliminate the biannual mailing that elected officials had been entitled to, I started work on an electronic or “E-Newsletter” to provide subscribers with updates. Since this past winter, I have been periodically sending out updates on issues before the Suffolk County Legislature, projects I am working on and various community happenings that are of interest to all of you.

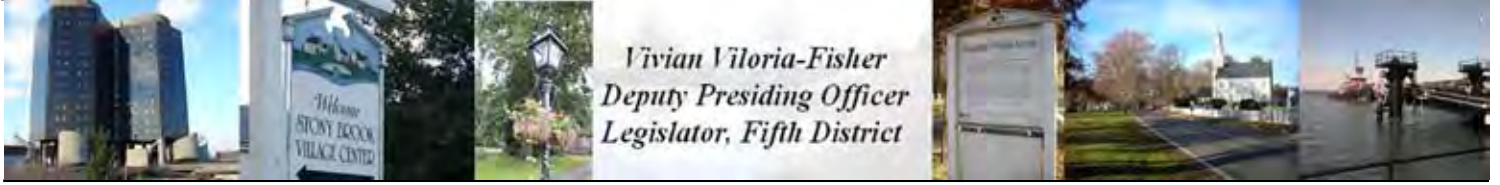
An E-Newsletter is the easiest, “greenest” and most economical way of letting you know what I have been up to. It has always been my goal to reduce mailings that use a lot of paper and cost taxpayers for every printing. By launching this new, electronic newsletter, I have been able to reduce the financial and environmental costs that result from district wide mailings while not reducing your ability and right to know what is happening in our County.

If you have not yet subscribed to the “E-Newsletter”, please call or e-mail your address to my office so that I can add you to our distribution list. As the issues before the Suffolk County Legislature impact your life on a daily basis, I encourage you to subscribe and read the E-Newsletter. As always, please feel free to call my office to discuss anything that is of concern to you and your family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vivian Viloria-Fisher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# Community Report From



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### Viloría-Fisher Reelected DPO For '09

Suffolk County Legislator Vivian Viloría-Fisher was unanimously re-elected to serve as the Legislature's Deputy Presiding Officer. The vote came during the Legislature's 2009 Organizational Meeting during which the body selects its leadership, its Counsel, sets meeting schedules and adopts the Rules of the Legislature that will govern the body over the course of the coming year.



This was the fourth time the veteran Legislator has been elected to the post during her tenure. Her first nomination came in January of 2006.

"I am proud and privileged to be able to continue to serve the Legislature and the residents of the Fifth Legislative District in this capacity," Viloría-Fisher said shortly after the vote.

With Viloría-Fisher's re-election, she remains the Legislature's number two person and will further assist the body in its mission of offering residents a responsive and streamlined County government during these difficult times.

Viloría-Fisher has also remained Chairwoman of the Legislature's Parks & Recreation committee and serves as a member of the Ways & Means and the Economic Development, Higher Education & Energy Committees.

### After 7 Years New Parks User Fees Adopted

The Suffolk County Legislature overrode the veto of Resolution 33-2009, a bill amending the user fee schedule for Suffolk County Parks. The legislation sponsored by Deputy Presiding Officer Vivian Viloría-Fisher imposes an increase in fees paid at County parks for 2009.

This will be the first increase in fees since 2002. During those years the Consumer Price Index (rate of inflation) has increased by 24%; however, the Parks fees have remained constant except for new exemptions that actually reduce or waive fees for some Suffolk County residents.

In 2007, the Suffolk County Parks Department's expenditures were over \$22 million, while revenues collected at the Parks were only \$9.6 million. Since 2002, for instance, the Suffolk County Parks Department's expenditures for energy have increased by 65%. While most would agree that Suffolk County should, to some extent, subsidize the Park System, taxpayers cannot continue to fully make up that difference.

Last November, the Deputy Presiding Officer introduced and won approval of a fee schedule amendment bill that was ultimately vetoed by the County Executive. In January, a reworked bill was introduced. On average, Parks usage fee will increase 16% according to the Legislature's Budget Review Office [BRO].

According to an analysis completed by BRO, the adjustment in the fee schedule is expected to raise \$1 million that will go into the County's General Fund. Of the \$1 million in additional revenue, it is expected that approximately \$600 thousand will be provided to the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum as authorized by a companion resolution passed in November. That resolution calls for the one-time infusion of funds to the financially-strapped Museum be funded by the change in Parks usage fees. The remaining funds will be used to fund other critical County services during these difficult economic times.

*Need Assistance or Looking For A Volunteer Opportunity?  
Check out the Community Resource Data Base of Long Island  
[www.crdli.org](http://www.crdli.org)*

## ***Legislator Issues First "State of the District" Address***

Legislator Vivian Viloría-Fisher said that she is hopeful for the future in an address to local not-for-profit organizations, civic members and business leaders. In the State of the Fifth Legislative District delivered before an audience of approximately 175 people, Viloría-Fisher discussed the tough budgetary realities that now confront Suffolk County as a result of the economic downturn, but reported that she remains optimistic because of the quality of the residents and business owners that live and work within the district.

"This community is known for its volunteerism and its altruism," Viloría-Fisher said. It is that spirit that will serve as a safety-net for so many during these difficult times. Touching on the services provided by not-for-profit organizations within the District, Viloría-Fisher tied together a theme of community service and hope in each other and in the future.

During the 30 minute address, Viloría-Fisher also highlighted some of the various institutions and resources located in our community that drive the regional economy and enrich the lives of Suffolk County residents. Many of these institutions are unique to this district; however, their impact goes far beyond the District's borders.

Another key theme of the morning was unity; bringing together people with divergent opinions with the goal of finding a common solution. This has been the way she has tried to govern since being elected and she cited several examples of where she has been able to do just that for the benefit of Suffolk County's residents. According to Viloría-Fisher democracy is like a tightrope. "You need people to disagree in a democracy and to state those interests," the Deputy Presiding Officer said. "Because you know a tightrope walker cannot walk across that tightrope unless there is tension from both sides."

For Viloría-Fisher, the state of the Fifth Legislative District will remain strong during these trying times as long as this community continues to look out for each other and listen to one another and continue to respect the dignity of neighbors.



## **SCCC POST PLAN "C" AGREEMENT WORKED OUT**

A bill sponsored by Suffolk County Legislator Vivian Viloría-Fisher is being credited with breaking an impasse between the County of Suffolk and Suffolk County Community College [SCCC] over budgetary control at the Institution. Resolution 109-2009, adopted by the Suffolk County Legislature at its March 3rd General Meeting, officially terminated the Plan "C" Agreement between Suffolk County and the College.

In 1996, the County and SCCC entered into what became known as the Plan "C" agreement, which defines the terms and conditions for Suffolk County's sponsorship of the Community College. Under the terms of the agreement, Suffolk County maintains certain fiscal and budgetary controls over the College's operations.

In a decision rendered, and subsequently upheld, on a 2007 court challenge to an agreement in Westchester County that was similar to Suffolk's Plan "C", the court invalidated this type of arrangement. According to the ruling, Suffolk County's "Plan C" agreement was inconsistent with New York State Education Law and the State Legislature's "intent to grant community colleges greater flexibility and autonomy in the budget process by increasing their independence from the local sponsors."

The Court ruled that the agreement was "invalid, unenforceable and void." Suffolk County appealed the ruling

While the parties battled in the courts, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education warned the College that its accreditation might be in jeopardy. The impasse was broken when Viloría-Fisher introduced IR 1053. The bill moved quickly through the Suffolk County Legislature's Economic Development, Higher Education and Energy Committee and was before the full Legislature at the first meeting following its introduction.

Faced with the prospect of the termination of the Plan "C" agreement both the County and SCCC commenced discussions to devise a new arrangement that was consistent with NYS Education law. Then, at a meeting attended by Legislator Viloría-Fisher during March's significant snow storm, representatives from both the County and the College finalized details of a workable plan.

# In The Community

## Legislator Vivian Viloría-Fisher Around Town

**A**t the April meeting of the Civic Association of the Setaukets and Stony Brook Legislator Viloría-Fisher discussed issues before the Suffolk County Legislature, the County’s budget deficit and other concerns of the community.



**A**s part of the Parents as Reading Partners Program at Arrowhead Elementary School in East Setauket, Deputy Presiding Officer Vivian Viloría-Fisher read books to two classes to foster a love of reading.

**C**ongratulations to new Eagle Scouts from the 5th L.D.: Stephen Cluett, Garrett J. Kulik, Nicholas Aaron Mage, Tomas J. Santangelo, William F. Schoepflin and Nicholas Vernola.



**T**he Suffolk County Legislature joined Stony Brook University Medical Center and the Setauket Fire Department in collecting unneeded and/or expired prescription drugs at Setauket Fire Department’s Nicolls Road Fire House. The collection drive’s goal was to prevent these unused pharmaceuticals from being thrown into the waste stream and eventually leaching into the groundwater.

**L**egislator Vivian Viloría-Fisher met with United States Senator Kirsten Gillibrand during the Senator’s first visit to Suffolk County. The Legislator and Senator discussed local and county-wide issues.

**L**egislator Viloría-Fisher was on hand for the ribbon cutting of Good Shepherd Hospice’s new, state-of-the-art Hospice and Palliative Care Center in Port Jefferson.



**D**eputy Presiding Officer Viloría-Fisher recently spoke to the North Shore Jewish Center, in Port Jefferson Station on volunteer opportunities within our community and the various needs served by these organizations.

