

Press Release
COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



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Lindsay Once Again Calls for Government Consolidation
Referendum Proposed to Shrink Suffolk County Legislature to 13 members

(SUFFOLK COUNTY – NY) Suffolk County Legislator Bill Lindsay recently introduced legislation that would give voters the chance to consolidate the Suffolk County Legislature from 18 elected members down to just 13 in a 2017 referendum. Budgetary woes and countywide fiscal challenges influenced Lindsay’s proposal to shrink the county’s legislative body, which will reduce redundancies, increase transparency, and promote greater government efficiency to better serve Suffolk residents.

As a Freshman Legislator in 2014, Lindsay sponsored and passed a referendum to finally consolidate the Comptroller and Treasurer’s office, ending a decade’s old debate and eliminating the antiquated system of having duplicative financial officer positions. This proposal has been lauded as a victory for taxpayers - saving over \$1.29 million dollars in hard costs savings and increasing the effectiveness of the Comptroller’s office leading to additional soft cost savings and an increase in audit recoveries.

“Upon being elected I have been committed to analyzing our overall operations, determining where we can make adjustments, and consolidating government in the most necessary areas to make government work better for the people,” said Legislator Lindsay. “We have reached the point where we cannot add any further burden on the taxpayers, and in order to make up the difference, some services, including the Legislature, need to be consolidated to allow for taxpayer dollars to be invested back into the community.”

If the Legislature votes to give residents the chance to approve this November 2017 referendum, the County’s Reapportionment Plan would advise how to divide up the County into 13 legislative seats based on the 2020 official census. 2021 would be the earliest the consolidation could take place based on the rules of reapportionment.

Suffolk County, which has approximately 1.5 million residents, is the 25th most populous county in the United States, yet among the other counties in the top 30; it ranks second in representation only to neighboring Nassau County, which currently has 19 elected legislators.

Suffolk County has 13 more elected county representatives than the most populous county, Los Angeles County, CA, where the population is upwards of 9.8 million residents, and is managed by a five member Board

of Supervisors. Despite its nearly 3 million residents, Maricopa, San Diego, and Orange counties gets by with only five elected county representatives. In addition, the 26th most populous county, Sacramento, CA, with 1.4 million residents is also operated by a five member Board of Supervisors.

The national average for representation in County government amongst the top 30 most populous counties is 10 and the average number of constituents per legislator is 418,901. Suffolk nearly doubles the national average of representation (18) while each legislator represents only 1/5 of the constituency (~83,000) of other counties nationwide.

“Our residents pay for 18 legislators to receive a \$100,000 a year salary, 18 individual district offices with 2 county centers, other benefits of a county car and cell phone and other incentives that come at the taxpayer’s expense,” said Lindsay. “From the federal government down to the local towns and villages, Suffolk County has tremendous representation, but when that representation comes at a financial burden to taxpayers, our voters should have a voice as to whether we should disband, dissolve, or consolidate any and all functions of local government to better meet our community’s needs.”

Lindsay froze his own salary upon being elected, refused a county car and cell phone, moved offices to save money, and has even fought to end automatic pay increases for all Suffolk County elected officials, twice. In 2014, Lindsay proposed an outright abolishment of the automatic pay increase; however his colleagues didn’t let the bill out of committee to be voted on by the full legislature. Currently another bill is pending before the legislature to suspend the automatic pay increases for 5 years.

Consolidating the legislature is an important step towards making government more efficient and more effective. As it stands now, there is too much red tape for Suffolk County residents and moving to reduce the number of elected officials will help streamline government while saving taxpayer dollars.

“I was able to give our residents a choice at smart, efficient consolidation in 2014, and the will of the people successfully prevailed,” said Lindsay. “Now I want their opinion again - to decide if 18 elected representatives is a necessary function with a looming budget deficit. I’m confident that our voters will make the most responsible and practical choice.”

This proposal, which will officially be laid on the table on November 22nd, will have a public hearing on December 6th in Riverhead and will be left open to allow for input from residents across Long Island at the following public hearing on December 20th in Hauppauge.

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*Suffolk County Legislator Bill Lindsay is the Chairman of the Economic Development Committee, Chairman of the Parks & Recreation Committee, and Vice Chairman of the Government Operations, Personnel, Information Technology, and Housing Committee. Bill represents the 8th legislative district which consists of Bayport, Blue Point, Bohemia, Holbrook, Holtsville, Oakdale, Sayville, West Sayville parts of North Patchogue and Ronkonkoma.