



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Oppenheimer and Galef Hail Passage of Local Court Consolidation Bills

SUZI OPPENHEIMER June 21, 2011

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Legislation Would Allow Village and Town of Ossining to Merge Services, Improve Court Efficiencies, and Save Taxpayer Dollars

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Assemblywoman Sandy Galef and State Senator Suzi Oppenheimer announced today the passage of legislation that will allow the Town and Village of Ossining courts to consolidate into one more efficient, safer, and less expensive court that will serve both municipalities.

"Having two court systems, in the same building, is superfluous and unnecessary," Galef said. "This legislation will save money for Ossining taxpayers and make the justice system less complicated. I am so pleased that the Town and Village of Ossining, with the help of the New York State judicial system, were able to collaborate to achieve this result."

"This bill is a model of how governmental entities can work together to consolidate efforts and perform the business of government more efficiently and with less cost," said Oppenheimer. "I applaud the Town and Village of Ossining, along with the state judicial system, for making the needs of taxpayers and users of the courts their top priority."

The Town of Ossining and Village of Ossining overlap in many of their responsibilities. Bills A8120/S5532 will eliminate the duplicate Village Court and merge it with the Town's, while maintaining employment for staff and adding an additional justice for the town. Both the Town and Village wish for this merger to occur, as they believe it will increase financial savings and improve efficiency.

Administrative Judge Alan Scheinkman, who was instrumental in working out the fine points of the merger with the two municipalities, added, "We are very excited that the Town and Village of Ossining with the approval of the state legislature have taken an enormous step forward in court consolidation. We welcome this very innovative opportunity."

Town Supervisor Catherine Borgia said: "We thank the New York State legislature for passing this bill. Allowing the two Ossining Justice courts to merge will reduce duplication, provide better service to Ossining constituents, and save taxpayer dollars. We hope this consolidated court will be a model for other communities in New York State."

Village of Ossining Mayor Bill Hanauer commented: "In the passage of this landmark legislation, the State Legislature has provided their consent to consolidate the Village Court and Town Courts. For twenty years, the two municipalities have shared the provision of a large number of essential services. Once the two Boards have agreed to all terms and conditions of an inter-municipal agreement, we will merge all functions of the two courts, thereby providing more efficient judicial services. We already share the Court facilities. No non-judicial employee will be laid off. We look forward to January 1, 2012, when the newly enlarged Town Court will be initiated."

This legislation is the result of lengthy negotiations between town and village officials to develop a fair and efficient court consolidation plan. Senator Oppenheimer and Assemblywoman Galef worked closely with the village and town to ensure that the bill

accomplishes the local officials' objectives in seeking the merger.

“This legislation will help Ossining to share services and will benefit the taxpayers as well as all those who use the courts,” Galef concluded.

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