

Rockville Centre Democratic Club

Talking Points

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The Nassau County Democratic Team



Laura Curran
County Executive

Jack Schnirman
County Comptroller

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County Clerk

Laura Curran's County Executive Platform

- [Ending the Culture of Corruption](#)
- [Fixing the County's Finances](#)
- [Promoting Smart Growth](#)
- [Making Nassau Government Look Like Nassau County](#)

[Details Below – Check Laura's website for updates.]



Laura Curran's Website: <http://www.lauracurran2017.com/join-us/>

Ending the Culture of Corruption

Laura Curran has made combatting the rampant corruption in Nassau County a tenet of her time on the Legislature and the primary focus of her campaign for County Executive.

In the wake of contracting scandals that led to the conviction of former New York State Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos on federal corruption charges, Curran stood with the Democratic Caucus in the Legislature to fight for an Independent Inspector General to oversee the County procurement process. Following the indictments of County Executive Ed Mangano and former Oyster Bay Town Supervisor John Venditto, Curran announced her candidacy for County Executive on a pledge to fix the mess in Mineola.

Curran is the only candidate in the race who has unveiled detailed, point-by-point plans to update Nassau's ethics standards, clean up the contracting process, and end the culture of corruption that allows the cronyism, nepotism, and waste that has permeated our local government for decades.

Curran's Ethics Reform Plan

- Create an independent Office of the Inspector General
- End the era of nepotism in County hiring
- Reinvigorate the office of the Commissioner of Investigations
- Enact term limits for the County Executive, County Comptroller, County Clerk, and Legislature
- Strengthen financial disclosure forms to include relatives who do business with the County
- Rewrite the County's "Whistleblower Law" to empower employees to come forward
- Update and modernize the County Code of Ethics
- Reconstitute the County Board of Ethics and take politics out of ethics oversight

Curran's Contracting Reform Plan

- Create an independent Office of the Inspector General
- Require full legislative review of all contracts
- Install a countywide electronic filing system to catch conflicts of interest
- Mandate full vendor disclosure of all connections to elected officials, county employees, and political contributions
- Publish all unsolicited proposals online and make publicly available as soon as they are received
- Increase competition and participation from MWBEs by eliminating fees bidders pay to view solicitations
- Disclose who, specifically, prepared the specifications and bids for any purchase
- Publish all bidding documents online
- Provide clear, simple, and concise rules for all procurement officers

Curran's Patronage Reform Plan

- Barring all County Executive appointees from holding leadership positions in any political party or any local political club
- Prohibit members of her Administration from ever asking an applicant about his or her political affiliation

- Ensuring all hiring is based on merit, and all jobs filled will be real jobs that work for the public good
- Opening summer, seasonal and part-time jobs to all residents
- Enforcing the County rules against hiring and supervising relatives
- Ensuring the rule against gifts to County employees and officials is strictly enforced

Curran's Transparency Reform Plan

- Modernizing the list of employees and officials required to file Financial Disclosure Statements to ensure it includes those who negotiate, authorize or monitor compliance for:
 - contracts, permits, and occupancy agreements
 - lease, sale or purchase of real property
 - purchase or rent goods and services
- Requiring Financial Disclosure Statements from any party to a County personal services contract, and anyone employed by or associated with a firm that is party to a County personal services contract when that individual directly advises any elected official
- The creation of an online, user-friendly version of the County budget
- The creation of an online "County Checkbook" that shows every vendor payment made every month, published in a clear and understandable way
- The creation of an online database that shows all proposed items filed with the Clerk of the Legislature, all items presented to the Legislature, and how each legislator ultimately votes
- Publishing and posting before each legislative session a readable and informative agenda so the public will know what items the Legislature will be considering
- Calling on the Legislature to hold regular nighttime meetings so the public can see their legislators in action and ask questions or offer comments

Curran's Taxpayer Funded Mail Reform Plan

- Mass mailings to the public must be informative
 - May contain only objective information and verifiable facts
 - May inform residents only of upcoming events, public health or safety concerns or upcoming changes to County procedures or programs
 - May include the politician's name only once
 - May not mention other public officials or politicians
 - May not include the politician's picture
- Publically-financed mailings must state that they were paid for with taxpayer funds
 - Must also identify the elected official who authorized the mailing
- Funds allotted for mailings must be identified for the public at budget time
 - County budget must specifically identify funds allocated to public officials for mailings
 - Funds allocated to the Legislature for mailings must be allotted equally to all legislators
- All mailings must stop 60 days before Primary and General Elections

- The mailing blackout will apply whether or not an incumbent is facing a challenger
- Fines of up to \$10,000 may be imposed for violations of these rules
 - Copies of all elected official mass mailings to be filed with the new, bipartisan Board of Ethics
 - The new Board will be responsible for review and imposition of fines for rules violations

Curran's Campaign Finance Reform Plan

- Bar all appointed employees and officials who Curran appoints from making contributions, in any amount, to her campaign
- Bar all appointed employees and officials from raising money for Curran's campaign
- Create a Doing Business List that identifies all companies that do business with the County as well as their principals, and then limit the amount of contributions they can make to candidates for County office
- Limit contributions to no more than \$1,000 for candidates for county-wide office and \$500 for legislative candidates
- This reform would cover:
 - County contracts and those who bid for them
 - County grants
 - The sale, purchase or rental of county property
 - Any economic development agreement that provides financial incentives in exchange for development, creation or retention of business

Fixing the County's Finances

Managing the County's finances is one of the County Executive's most fundamental responsibilities because it enables the County to responsibly provide the services residents need and want with the smallest fiscal impact on taxpayers. Laura Curran believes the County is failing miserably in this regard and her first priority will be restoring the County's financial health and balancing the budget without the phony accounting and added debt accrued by the current administration.

Just like any other business operation, the County needs to align its income and expenses. That means reducing expenses and increasing revenue without raising taxes -- it's that simple, but it requires political will and effective leadership.

Beginning her first day in office, Laura will engage every County department in the painstaking task of analyzing every expense line in its budget. That means examining every program, evaluating its need, effectiveness, and cost, and putting forth realistic and practical proposals for effective change. The goal: "Re-Building the Budget" countywide, in line with the county's responsibilities and economic reality.

At the same time, Laura will be targeting Nassau's "corruption tax," because corruption in government is not only wrong, it affects the bottom line.¹ Paying for things we don't need and services we're not getting, and packing the payroll with patronage, drains cash right out of the County's accounts. Experts have estimated that organizations in this country lose up to 7% of their annual revenue due to fraud. Targeting fraud to reduce Nassau's expenses by just 1% would add more than \$32 million to the County's bottom line. And there's potential for more.

Bringing in more revenue -- *from sources other than taxpayers* -- is also critical to Laura's plan to restore the County's fiscal health. A strong local economy brings more money into Nassau and more revenue directly into the County budget. With that goal, Laura will focus on facilitating increased business spending in Nassau, the creation of well-paying private-sector jobs, improved transportation options, and increasing tourism. She also will work with the Towns and other municipalities to reduce local impediments that, at times, keep our economy from flourishing. In addition, from Day 1, she will ensure that the Nassau County IDA fulfills its mission to promote and improve the economic prosperity of Nassau County.

1. Office of the New York State Comptroller, *Preventing Fraud and Abuse of Public Funds: Local Governments Need to Do Better* (August 2010).

Promoting Smart Growth

Laura Curran is an outspoken advocate for smart growth through transit-oriented development. She knows that as a county, we need to provide a welcoming culture for mixed-use development centered around our already existing transit hubs. This type of development provides much-needed affordable housing options for our young professionals and golden age communities in areas that are easily accessible by the Long Island Railroad and NICE Bus system. It also creates an economic environment that attracts new businesses, growing the tax base and ultimately lessening the burden placed on our current homeowners.

Having walkable downtowns leads to a healthier economy and environment, and as County Executive, Laura Curran will continue her work as a smart growth advocate. Laura will ensure that there is a cooperative effort to build and grow in a manner that attracts new business, benefits all of Nassau County's residents, and keeps our young people and seniors here at home.

- To promote the use of alternative modes of transit, Laura went car-free for a week, using the NICE Bus system, the LIRR, and riding her bike around town to meetings and work. Accessible public transit goes hand-in-hand with smart growth, and Laura sincerely believes that having a robust public transit system is a necessity for our residents, as people rely on it to get to work, doctor's appointments, and school. When eleven bus routes were cut in early 2016, Laura identified \$3 million to fund the restoration of most of those routes. As County Executive, she will work to have recurring revenue dedicated to the buses to prevent further cuts.
- Laura has been a key proponent of the Grand Avenue Complete Streets Project in Baldwin, which aims to improve traffic circulation and foster a safer environment for all commuters, including pedestrians and bicyclists. This type of project lays the groundwork for a walkable downtown that attracts businesses and developers to the area.

She will work with all municipalities to continue these types of forward-thinking projects.

- Laura is being recognized for her efforts in the Baldwin revitalization project at the 2017 Smart Growth Awards, and has been a panelist at multiple Smart Growth conferences, most recently at the 2017 Vision Long Island Complete Streets Summit. In 2016, she was honored by Long Island Jobs with Justice for her work to restore NICE bus routes.

Making our Government Look like our County

Laura Curran has pledged to make our government look like the citizens it represents, and that starts by hiring women.

Currently, under County Executive Ed Mangano, only 4 of the 21 senior County positions – including Commissioners, Deputy County Executives, County Attorney, Sheriff, Assessor, and Treasurer – are held by women. That’s unacceptable and it needs to change.

As part of her platform, Laura Curran has set a goal of staffing at least 50% of her senior leadership team with women. By bringing new people into government, Laura will fulfill her pledge to hire based on what you know, not who you know. Additionally, Laura’s plan will finally shake things up and end a failed status quo that created the mess in Nassau County. Women bring a different approach to government and Laura's administration will recognize the value of women and people of color in leadership positions.

Furthermore, Curran has pledged to form a government that recognizes the unique and growing diversity of Nassau County. Every day, Nassau County’s communities of color grow and the County’s government should reflect that. That’s why Laura plans not only to increase the number of people of color in leadership positions, but also to increase contracting opportunities for Minority and Women-Owned Businesses and recruit the most talented applicants for County government – not just hire from “the good old boys club.”