

# Curran's veto prevails

There won't be a Nov. vote on elected assessor

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Nassau legislators on Monday failed to override County Executive Laura Curran's veto of a Republican bill that would have put the question of whether to switch to an elected county tax assessor before voters in November.

Democrats sank the override by refusing to provide majority Republicans with the supermajority of 13 votes necessary to overturn a county executive veto. All 11 Republicans voted to override, and the eight Democrats voted no.

Democrats argued that switching from an appointed to an elected assessor would open the door to unqualified candidates.

"We rejected a flawed proposal that would have potentially allowed political party bosses — from either party — to put an unqualified individual in the position of making crucial decisions that impact every Nassau County taxpayer," said legislature Minority Leader Kevan Abrahams (D-Freeport).

Republicans cited Curran's "error-riddled" reassessment of more than 400,000 properties in pressing for an elected assessor.

"From the beginning of the property assessment debacle, the majority caucus has been fighting to give residents a strong voice on this issue," said Presiding Officer Richard



There were 11 votes to override the veto, all from Republicans, but a supermajority of 13 votes would have been necessary.

Nicoletto (R-New Hyde Park). "It's telling that as much as the county executive touts the reassessment's transparency and accountability, she refuses to allow the taxpayers to confirm or reject that notion in November."

The GOP bill requesting a ballot referendum on whether to create an elected assessor's position passed April 22. Curran vetoed the bill on May 14.

David Moog, a Curran appointee, serves as county assessor.

The vote Tuesday followed nearly two hours of tense debate in which GOP and Democratic leaders spoke over each other, trading political jabs.

Democrats recalled the 2009

referendum in which voters changed the position from an elected to an appointed job, and argued that putting the issue on the November ballot would bring out more Republican voters. All 19 members of the county legislature are up for re-election this year.

Abrahams warned of an elected assessor "who will make decisions based on votes in a particular area."

Addressing Republicans, Abrahams said, "don't try to claim that you are giving power to the people because you don't really believe it. We've been down this road before."

Abrahams urged lawmakers to instead back a plan to spread property tax changes over five

years, to lessen the impact on homeowners who may experience a sharp rise in their taxes because of reassessment.

Republicans said taxpayers have the right to be "stakeholders" in the reassessment process.

"It's a matter of knowing how to get things done — getting it done right and getting it done with accuracy," said Legis. Howard Kopel (R-Lawrence). "The fact that we have a record number of people who are protesting their valuations is a testament to the fact that something is wrong. Clearly what we are doing now is not working."

After the vote, Curran said, "elected officials should offer solutions built on best practices, and not empty political gestures

such as this local law — which doesn't even require a qualified individual. As seen in the past, an elected assessor would be pressed to do the popular thing for some residents instead of the right thing for all residents."

Curran, a Democrat, said her veto represented "another step to ensure Nassau doesn't go back to a broken system racking up enormous debt and unfairly shifting tax burden onto property owners who didn't grieve."

Curran, who took office January 2018, has implemented the first reassessment of Nassau County's residential and commercial properties in nearly a decade. The tax rolls had been frozen under her predecessor, Edward Mangano, a Republican.

## Northwell to perform liver transplants on LI

BY DAVID REICH-HALE  
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Northwell Health said Monday the state Department of Health has signed off on its plan to establish Long Island's first adult liver transplant program.

The New Hyde Park-based health system said the program will be located at the Sandra Atlas Bass Center for Liver Diseases at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset. The adult transplant service will

begin taking patients with the greatest need later this month.

"Nearly five people die each day in the United States waiting for a liver that will never come. By establishing an adult liver transplant program on Long Island, we're changing the narrative for thousands of New Yorkers living with this fatal disease," said Michael J. Dowling, president and CEO at Northwell Health. "This is the latest transplant program that Northwell Health has estab-

lished with the goal of improving the health of the communities we serve, from adult kidney to pediatric kidney to heart and now, liver transplant."

The program is expected to perform at least 10 liver transplants in the first year.

The Bass Center is already providing pre- and post-liver transplant services, along with care for those suffering from end-stage liver disease, to more than 100 patients.

The new liver transplant pro-

gram, which debuts 16 months after Northwell Health successfully performed the region's first heart transplant at the Sandra Atlas Bass Heart Hospital at North Shore, opens access to critically ill patients in an underserved area that stretches from Suffolk and Nassau counties to Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island, Northwell officials said. More than 1,200 state residents are currently awaiting a liver transplant, they said.

The liver transplant program

was developed in partnership with Maimonides Medical Center. Other hospitals in the state perform liver transplants: Manhattan's New York Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center, Mount Sinai Medical Center and New York University Medical Center in the Bronx; Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx; SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn; Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla; and Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester.