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## Gregory Seeks to Revitalize Communities by Reclaiming and Remediating Blighted Properties

In February DuWayne was a “Best Ideas” presenter at the Suffolk County Housing Summit, hosted by the Suffolk County Planning Commission. The only elected official asked to give a presentation, DuWayne delivered a report titled *Banking on Rebuilding Our Communities: An Overview of New York State's Land Bank Act*. His remarks focused on the role land banks can play in rehabilitating problem properties and improving the communities they blight.

In March the Legislature adopted DuWayne’s initiative to establish the Suffolk County Land Bank Corporation, a not-for-profit entity that gives the County discretion to acquire and sell *brownfields* for development purposes. *Brownfields are abandoned properties, previously used for industrial purposes or commercial uses that are contaminated by hazardous waste or pollution.* Often located in busy commercial or industrial areas, they have the potential to be put back on the tax rolls once they are cleaned up.

**“Majority Leader Gregory’s efforts to create a land bank, which can play significant role in revitalizing Suffolk’s housing market, are right on point,”** says David Calone chairman of the Suffolk County Planning Commission and host of the summit. **“If we hope to find a way out of our housing crises we need leaders with innovative ideas like this to help get us there.”**

## DuWayne Opposes Redistricting that Divides Neighborhoods and Hurts Communities of Color

One of the results of the National Census every decade is the redrawing of election districts. The 2010 Census resulted in some significant changes to 15<sup>th</sup> district.

While DuWayne was happy to learn that the proposed map for his district would add all of Copiague, he was distressed that the new map hurts residents in one of Wheatley Heights four election districts by carving them away from the rest of their community and relocating them into a different legislative district.

**DuWayne was so opposed to the weakening of the power of voters in this election district, he subsequently refused to vote to support the redistricting plan when it came up for ratification at the Legislature in June.**

DuWayne's concern was that by isolating out a small group of voters the plan begins encroaching upon The Voting Rights Act as it was originally written and intended.

The VRA prohibits drawing district lines that discriminate on the basis of "race, color, or membership in a protected language minority group."

A 2009 split decision by the Supreme Court severely weakened the VRA by ruling that a minority group must constitute more than 50% of its citizens voting age population for a district (or potential district) to be protected by the VRA.

As a result of the unfairness of this redistricting plan, DuWayne has authored legislation that will require an additional public hearing before a redistricting plan can be adopted. His measure will also require that voters who have been redistricted out of their current legislative district into a new one be specifically notified of the change by mail.

**"There is a reason we are called minorities. And when our communities are further divided our interests are further marginalized,"** says DuWayne. **"Splitting up Wheatley Heights between two districts only causes voters of color to lose influence on issues that have serious implications for their community."**



### DuWayne Makes History as First Majority Leader of Color

At an organizational Caucus meeting last December, DuWayne's fellow legislators voted overwhelmingly to appoint him **the first Majority Leader of color in the history of the Suffolk County Legislature.**

Gregory's election to this all-important leadership position promises to be a new beginning not only for him but for the Democratic Caucus, which with 3 new members, still maintains a 2 to 1 majority in the Legislature. And DuWayne has been playing a pivotal leadership role in guiding the legislature through the County's fiscal crises.



### SIGN UP FOR SAFETY'S SAKE

The Suffolk County Department of Fire Rescue and Emergency Services has established a Code Red emergency notification system that can deliver customized pre-recorded emergency messages directly to your home and business. Code Red also has high speed email and text messaging capability.

**[Click here to sign up to receive Code Red emergency notifications](#)**

Those without Internet access may call the Office of Emergency Management's Customer Service Center (631-852-4900), Monday through Friday, (9AM-5PM) to supply their information over the phone.

## Encouraging Job Creation by Streamlining Permit Applications

DuWayne wants you to know about the County's new online permitting process that will reduce the delays that hinder job creation.

The new **Submission & Status Terminal** ([www.suffolkcountyny.gov/sst](http://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/sst)) will streamline the application process for those seeking approval for Health Department or Department of Public Works permits allowing applicants to track submission date, review date, items needed for approval and current status.

The first phase of the new portal allows residential applications to be filed online, 24-7 and allow for the tracking of the application from submission through final approval. The first phase also includes the tracking of commercial applications submitted in original form.

In addition to the development of the terminal, the department of Wastewater Management is offering Design Professional courses to explain the permit process, highlight common problems with applications, and provide standards that guide the process.

The terminal offers a video tutorial to provide the requirements of a residential permit application and highlights the Top 10 deficiencies in residential permit applications.

The next phase of roll out for the terminal will include the ability to submit online commercial applications for both the Departments of Health Services and Public Works and food establishment permits which fall under the purview of the Bureau of Public Health Protection.

Officer Andriella was able to dislodge the chicken nugget and thanks to Grace's new-found ability to dial 911 and calmly describe to the dispatcher the events that occurred, her little brother survived the scare.

DuWayne not only presented a proclamation to Grace at a packed

meeting of the Legislature, but he also gave her a toy medical bag telling Grace and her proud family, "***Grace, I hope this gift inspires you to keep up the good work and maybe when you grow up you'll want to become a first responder or medical professional.***"



DuWayne and Toni Riedel from the *Early Years Institute* recently recognized Steven Taylor, a new graduate of North Babylon High for winning the **Screen Free Week Competition**. An innovative national campaign to reduce the time children and adults spend with TV, computers, video games, and hand-held devices. :-)

### DuWayne Honors Little Hero

In June, DuWayne honored 5-year old Grace Varley from Amityville who saved her 2-year old brother's life Myles, when he began choking on a chicken nugget back in May.

Grace, who had recently learned to call 911 in school, did just that while her grandmother unsuccessfully tried to dislodge the food from her baby brother's throat.

As a result of Grace's quick thinking, a neighbor John Andriella—who is also a police officer—heard the dispatch call come over his



radio and went right to Grace's home and took over from Grandma performing the Heimlich maneuver on little Myles.



## Serving You is My First Responsibility

*“What gives me the most satisfaction isn’t writing legislation. Don’t get me wrong, I love looking for ways to make peoples’ lives better by implementing a new law to empower or protect them.*

*But what makes me even prouder is when, at the end of the day—while I’m closing up the office and packing my bag getting ready to go home—and I think about all the calls that me and my staff got that day from people looking for help with this issue or that problem.*

*Some of our neighbors are in pretty desperate straits and they call me with tears in their voices. I’m just so humbled by the fact that they rely on us.*

*And nothing makes me feel prouder then when I know we’re able to make a difference for them or you.” –DuWayne*



**If You Need Help Please Don’t Hesitate to Contact Me At:**

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**Office hours are 9 to 5 weekdays.**

**Appointments are available, but walk-ins are always welcome.**