

PRESS RELEASE FROM
PRESIDING OFFICER DUWAYNE GREGORY



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Gregory, League of Women Voters Host Student Day at the Legislature

Students debate mock bill to ban drones over school property

HAUPPAUGE, N.Y. – Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory and the League of Women Voters of Suffolk County on Oct. 8 hosted 27 high school students from Hauppauge High School, Commack High School, Smithtown High School East, Huntington High School and North Babylon High School for a Student Day at the William H. Rogers Legislature Building in Hauppauge.

“I was immensely impressed by the intellect and enthusiasm of these young people,” said Presiding Officer Gregory. “Student Day was structured to reinforce that government is not merely an abstract idea, but a tangible entity that is powered by the people it serves. I commend the League of Women Voters for its commitment to executing this event and to educating the public about the importance of civic engagement.”

“This innovative and valuable program created by the Suffolk County Legislature and the League of Women Voters exceeded all our expectations,” said Lisa Scott, president of the League of Women Voters of Suffolk County. “We are proud of the enthusiasm, intelligence and skills of our local high school participants and look forward to working with the Legislature and the schools on future Student Days and other good government forums and initiatives. The League is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and this program served to expose our students to the workings of their county legislature, and actually experience, via role-playing, how a bill becomes a law in Suffolk County.”

Following presentations from officials representing various county agencies, students broke into caucuses to discuss mock legislation that would ban the use of drones over school property. In a simulated General Meeting, students portrayed legislators and concerned citizens who argued for or against the bill. After lively debate, the bill failed to obtain the majority needed to pass, as the vote tied at 9-9.

“Student Day at the Suffolk County Legislature was a valuable experience that helped me better my communication skills and increase my knowledge of our local government,” said Ally McFadyen, a senior at Smithtown High School East. “I loved posing as the Presiding Officer because it gave me the power to conduct a General Meeting and understand how the Legislature functions. I plan on incorporating the skills I acquired during this exercise into my daily life by addressing issues clearly and working in a group to find the best solution to a problem. I would like to thank the Suffolk County Legislature and the League of Women Voters for organizing this event, which has inspired me to get more involved in my community.”

In addition to Presiding Officer Gregory, the day’s speakers included: 12th District Legislator Leslie Kennedy, 13th District Legislator Robert Trotta, Suffolk County Comptroller John Kennedy and Suffolk County Medical Examiner Dr. Michael Caplan. Representatives from the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Office, the Suffolk County Police Department, and the Suffolk County Department of Labor, Licensing and Consumer Protection also addressed the students. Additionally, community volunteer Leah Richberg of West Babylon offered a presentation on cultural competency, and representatives from Long Island Cares and Habitat for Humanity spoke about the public service performed by nonprofit organizations and how they interact with the county to further their missions.

“I’ve worked with the League of Women Voters for many years, and I hold that organization in very high regard,” said Comptroller Kennedy, who previously served as a county legislator. “It comes as no surprise that the League would offer this opportunity for students to learn about public service. I encourage these young people to pursue further opportunities in county government by interning with one of our elected officials or agencies.”

“I am thrilled that several school districts from the area I represent attended this event,” said Legislator Kennedy. “We will one day have to pass the responsibility of policy-making to the next generation, and they will be making the decisions that affect us as senior citizens. It is important that we instill in these youth now the importance of both compassion and fiscal responsibility.”

“I think this event provided a great opportunity for students to learn how county government works and to meet some of the legislators,” said Suffolk County Legislator Rob Trotta.

A pizza lunch was donated by the office of County Executive Steve Bellone.

The Legislature will host another Student Day on Oct. 15, this time drawing students from the East End.

Attached Photo: Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory and the League of Women Voters hosted a Student Day at the William H. Rogers Legislature Building in Hauppauge Oct. 8. Seated, from left: Amanda LoScalzo of Huntington High School, Matthew Guidi of Smithtown High School East and Alonzo Tabada of North Babylon High School debate a mock bill that would ban drones over school property. Clerk of the Legislature Jason Richberg, standing, looks on.

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