



# Queens Civic Congress

P.O. Box 238, Flushing, NY 11363 (718) 225-2807 fax: (718) 225-2818  
[www.queensciviccongress.org](http://www.queensciviccongress.org) [queensciviccongr@aol.com](mailto:queensciviccongr@aol.com)

**President**  
Sean M. Walsh

**Executive Vice Presidents**  
Corey Bearak Patricia Dolan

**Secretary**  
Seymour Schwartz

**Treasurer**  
James Trent

**Founders**  
Robert Harris  
Albert Greenblatt

**Vice Presidents**  
Edwin Westley  
David Kulick

Richard Hellenbrecht  
Audrey Lucas

Paul Kerzner  
Tyler Cassell

Nagassar Ramgarib  
Dorothy Woo

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2006

Contact:  
Corey Bearak  
(718) 343-6779

## **QUEENS CIVICS' BUDGET COMMENTS TO QUEENS BOROUGH BD.**

In testimony presented today (Thursday, February 9, 2006) to the Queens Borough Board, the Queens Civic Congress [QCC] called for a fair share of the City's budget for Education, Youth, Seniors, and Parks, additional building and housing inspectors, and routine staffing of community police beats and rollback of the property tax hike. The Congress also advocated adequately funded Offices of the Borough President and outlined opportunities to help maintain core services and to close the budget gap. The statement, presented at Borough Hall by QCC Executive Vice President Corey B. Bearak (North Bellerose Civic Association), follows:

Borough President Marshall and Borough Board Members:

Thank you for affording the Queens Civic Congress the opportunity to comment on the City's Preliminary Expense and Capital Budget. As an umbrella group of 100 civic organizations, our membership represents almost every community in the borough.

The Queens Civic Congress finds unacceptable the preliminary budget cuts to core programs and services such as libraries, seniors, youth, and CUNY. City Hall claims no responsibility to include these core programs and services the Council added during past budget negotiations, yet suggests the program face no risk; it remains grossly irresponsible of Mayors past and present to fail to baseline these programs that provide essential services; we welcome the comments of Speaker Christine Quinn and Finance Chairman David Weprin raising serious questions to this deleterious mayoral practice.

Last year we proposed that the Queens Civic Congress Foundation, a non-profit organization founded the the civic congress but with its distinct board, by-laws and corporate status, receive \$50,000 to conduct zoning studies throughout the borough. There remains need to review neighborhood zoning at a pace greater than what the City Planning Department can undertake. The foundation will work directly with civic associations in the borough to present preservation and re-zoning proposals to city agencies.

We support adequate funding for housing and building code enforcement, parks maintenance, precinct staffing, and zoning studies. We need libraries open seven days.

**Queens Civic Congress Borough Board Budget testimony, February 9, 2006, page two of two**

We welcome City Hall's attention to parts of our fiscal platform, particularly to apply some of the surplus to pay-as-you-go capital and capital debt reduction. The set aside for future health costs, however, could better be used to further reduce city debt and capital costs thereby saving more now and later. A smaller portion, if needed, could help address some of our programmatic concerns. Dedicating \$2 billion in this matter allows the mayor to look away from the measures that address the rising cost prescription drugs which drives much of the cost of Health Care as with Medicare and Medicaid that afflicts us today. Using the potential purchase power of the city and its health funds, real strides in health care cost reductions can be obtained.

The available surplus allows time to seriously study our recommendations to maximize revenues and strategically address the City's structural deficit. This includes at least \$2 billion - conservative numbers today - through real estate and personal income tax reforms.

We remain concerned about an ongoing failure to adequately fund the offices of the borough presidents to carry out their charter functions. City Charter Chapter 4, particularly section 82, requires borough presidents to monitor service delivery, review all capital projects in the borough, advise the mayor on the formulation of the Preliminary and Executive Budgets, provide technical assistance to community boards, and identify the borough's strategic needs. Eight years of static budgets and cuts in 2002 and 2003 severely restrict their performance of these duties envisioned by 1989's City Charter reforms and the voters who overwhelmingly approved them.

The Congress urges equalization efforts to that extend water rates relief equally to all ratepayers - single-family homeowners, the coops, and the small businessman. Remove capital costs from the water rate calculus. The QCC supports legislation sponsored by Assembly Member Mark Weprin to delay rate-setting until after the budget's adoption.

The Queens Civic Congress stands ready to work with our elected officials as we all seek to move our City forward. Thank you.

-30-

**Queens Civic Congress Members**

Assoc. of Old Forest Hills Bayside Hills Civic Assoc. Bayswater Civic Assoc. Bay Terrace Community Alliance Beachside Bungalow Preservation Assoc. Bellaire/Belvill Civic Assoc. Belle Harbor Property Owners Bellerose-Commonwealth Civic Assoc. Bellerose-Hillside Civic Assoc. Bell Park Manor-Terrace Community Council Bowne Park Civic Assoc. Briarwood Community Assoc. Cambria Heights Civic Assoc. College Point Civic Taxpayers Assoc. COMET Concerned Citizens of Laurelton Creedmoor Civic Assoc. Doug-Bay Manor Civic Assoc. Douglaston Civic Assoc. Douglas Manor Assoc East Flushing Civic Assoc. Federation of Laurelton Block Associations Floral Park Community Council Flushing on the Hill Civic Assoc. Flushing Heights Civic Assoc. Flushing Suburban Civic Assoc. Forest Hills Chamber of Commerce Forest Hills Community & Civic Assoc. Forest Hills Crescents Assoc. Forest Hills-Van Court Assoc. Fresh Meadows Homeowners Assoc. Georgetown Mews Glen Oaks Village Owners Greater Whitestone Taxpayers Civic Association Harding Heights Civic Assoc. Harrison Place/Sunnyside Gardens Hillcrest Estates Civic Assoc. Hilltop Village Co-op #1 Hilltop Village Co-op #2 Hilltop Village Co-op #4 Hollis Hills Civic Assoc. Holliswood Civic Assoc. Hollis Park Gardens Assoc. Holly Civic Assoc. Howard Beach Civic Forum Hunters Point Community Coalition Hyde Park Gardens Jackson Heights Beautification Group Jamaica Estates Assoc. Jamaica Hill Community Assoc. Joint Community Council College Point Juniper Park Civic Assoc. Kew Forest Neighborhood Civic Assoc. Kew Gardens Civic Assoc. Kew Gardens Hills Civic Assoc. Kissena Park Civic Assoc. Little Neck Bay Civic Assoc. Little Neck Community Assoc. Little Neck Pines Assoc. Locust Manor Neighborhood Civic Assoc. Lost Community Civic Assoc. Malba Civic Association Middle Village Property Owners Mitchell-Linden Civic Assoc. 97 Place Block Assoc. Newtown Civic Assoc. North Bellerose Civic Assoc. North Flushing Civic Assoc North Hills Estates Civic Assoc. North Queens Homeowners Civic Assoc. North Star Civic Assoc. Norwood Neighborhood Association Oakland Terrace/Gardens Council Off Broadway Homeowners Ozone Tudor Civic Assoc. Queensboro Hills Neighborhood Assoc. Queens Colony Civic Assoc. Queens Community Civic Corp. Queens Village Civic Assoc. Ramblersville-Hawtree Civic Assoc. Richmond Hill Historic Assoc. Ridgewood Property Owners Assoc. Robinwood Property Owners Rockaway Action Committee Rockaway Beach Civic Assoc. Rocky Hill Civic Assoc. Rosedale Civic Assoc. Royal Ranch Assoc. Sagamore Douglaston Civic Assoc. Southeast Queens Coalition of Concerned Neighbors South Ozone Park Coalition of Block Associations South Ozone Park West Civic Assoc. Springfield/Rosedale Community Assoc. Sunnyside Gardens Harrison Place Surrey Estates Civic Assoc. The Federation of Civic Associations of Southeast Queens The Property Civic Assoc. Union Turnpike Merchants Assoc. United Forties Civic Assoc. United Neighbors Civic Assoc. of Jamaica Utopia Estates Civic Assoc.

Utopia Improvement Assoc. Village Mall at Hillcrest Waldheim Neighborhood Assoc. Wayanda Civic Assoc. West Cunningham  
Park Civic Assoc. Westmoreland Assoc. Woodside Community Council