



**For Immediate Release**  
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\*\*\*Press Release\*\*\*

## **Assemblyman Skartados: State will fund a new city court judge for Newburgh**

*City requested additional judge to focus on quality of life issues*

In an effort to improve the quality of life in Newburgh, Assemblyman Frank Skartados (D-Milton) announced that Governor Andrew Cuomo has approved City Court Reform legislation that would add an additional state-funded judge for the City of Newburgh (Chapter 548 of 2013). The city requested an additional judge to assist in adjudicating code violations in a timely fashion.

“Unfortunately, Uncaring and careless landlords have neglected our city’s many historic buildings, posing a safety risk for our families,” Assemblyman Skartados said. “By securing this additional state-funded judge for Newburgh, the city will be able to crack down on serious code violations in a timely fashion. This will improve the quality life for the many families of in our city.”

“For too long absentee and irresponsible landlords have been allowed to let their properties deteriorate and create safety risks for our residents and irresponsible tenants have not been held accountable for the destruction they create,” Mayor Judy Kennedy said. “It’s time for accountability on everyone’s part and a third city judge that would focus on Codes enforcement and quality of life issues would be a real ‘game changer’ for the City of Newburgh. We are committed to moving this city forward in a positive way and also to our continued partnership with Assemblyman Skartados.”

“An additional judge hearing codes cases will be very helpful towards the good of all residents, workers and those who invest in City of Newburgh property,” City of Newburgh Police Chief Michael D. Ferrara said. “The end result could be more attractive neighborhoods, vibrant businesses and a better looking city for everyone. Property values should maintain if not increase and codes enforcement when consistent in a neighborhood can help reduce crime.”

“The addition of a third City Court Judge dedicated to resolving code compliance issues as well as landlord/tenant disputes will function in a manner similar to the state’s other ‘problem solving’ courts such as the domestic violence and drug courts,” said City of Newburgh Fire Chief Michael J. Vatter. “A judge dedicated to crafting remedies appropriate for the problems presented in the case will enable Newburgh to move forward with its multi-faceted approach in dealing with distressed properties and other housing issues.”

There are currently two full-time city judges in Newburgh, who handle both civil and criminal matters. The additional city court judge, focused on code enforcement, will send a clear message to absentee and irresponsible landlords that neglect to Newburgh’s historic buildings will no longer be tolerated.

The addition of a third full-time city court judge is estimated to bring Newburgh as much as \$1 million a year in revenue, due to increased prosecutions of absentee and negligent landlords. There is no cost to city taxpayers for this proposal. City court judges are funded by the state-operated Unified Court System and not local taxpayers.

“The additional city court judge to focus on code violations will help improve the quality of life in our city,” said Assemblyman Skartados. “No child should have to grow up around dangerous and dilapidated buildings that fail to meet basic safety standards.”