

**Steve Bellone (D)**

County Executive - Suffolk County

Incumbent (Elected in 2011)

Endorsed in 2015

Professional Background/Education:

- Served as Babylon Town Supervisor from 2001-2011.
- Launched Wyandanch Rising in 2002, a comprehensive, community-based revitalization plan that redevelops the area surrounding the Wyandanch Train Station into a walkable, pedestrian-friendly, vibrant downtown
- Introduced the *Reclaim Our Water* initiative in Suffolk County
- Bachelor of Arts degree at Queens College in 1991
- Enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1992
- Earned a master's degree in Public Administration from Webster University
- Earned his Law degree from Fordham University and was admitted to the New York Bar in 1999

Personal and Professional Initiatives:

- In response to Question 1, which asks the candidate to share their *accomplishments* or *experiences* that indicate their commitment to advancing a pro-environment agenda, candidate responded:
 - o “Suffolk County has approximately 360,000 unsewered homes, more than the entire state of New Jersey. To address this critical problem, a few years ago, we launched the Septic Improvement Program to make it affordable for homeowners to replace their outdated septic systems and cesspools -- the first of its kind in the state.”
 - o “Suffolk County is now the first County in the state to restrict the use of straws, making them by request only. Restaurants in Suffolk will now be required to make the switch over to environmentally friendly and biodegradable straws, stirrers, and containers. Additionally, I have also signed legislation to ban polystyrene, Styrofoam containers.”
 - o “Last year we furthered our commitment towards being a national leader on environmental issues by implementing legislation aimed at reducing the use of carryout bags – requiring businesses to place a minimum fee of 5 cents for carryout bags provided at shops.”
 - o In the last 3 years we have upgraded a significant portion of our transit bus fleet to hybrid with the purchase of 72 new, state-of-the-art hybrid transit busses.”

Questionnaire Highlights:

Supports all of the initiatives of the NYLCV, with the following additions:

- In response to Question 2, which asks the candidate to indicate their level of commitment to *Sustainable & Transit-Oriented Development*, the candidate responded:
 - o “In 2002, I launched the Wyandanch Rising initiative, a comprehensive, community based revitalization effort centered around the LIRR station.”

- o “I also launched TOD efforts in Copiague and East Farmingdale. The East Farmingdale TOD was centered around the reopening of the LIRR station adjacent to Republic Airport and a new Bus Rapid Transit system connecting the various LIRR lines on the Route 110 corridor.”
- o “I also launched the Connect Long Island regional transportation and development plan as Babylon Town Supervisor and expanded it upon taking office as Suffolk County Executive in 2012.”
- o “The county has supported 25 TOD projects in various stages of planning, design and construction over the past seven years. The County’s investment of \$17.3 million in affordable housing funding and \$11.3 million in Jumpstart funding will help generate a return of \$6 billion in project development.”
- o “Here are a few recent TOD projects that I have been proud to support:
 - *Copiague Commons*, Located across from the Long Island Rail Road Station
 - *Patchogue Village*, New Village creates 291 apartments walking distance from the LIRR.
 - *The Ronkonkoma Hub*, a new vision for Ronkonkoma and a unique development opportunity for Long Island to capitalize on the Long Island Railroad, Long Island MacArthur Airport and a major roadway corridor. This project could create up to 1,450 multi-family residential units right in the heart of our transportation network.
 - *Speonk Commons* located less than 300 feet from the Speonk LIRR station.”
- In response to Question 3, which asks the candidate to indicate their level of commitment to **Public Health**, the candidate responded:
 - o “Last year I announced the creation of the SuffolkShare Public Health Partnership. It was formed as part of our innovative Suffolk County shared services initiative and it provides a platform for local governments to work together to combat ticks and tick-borne illness.
 - Additionally, we have proposed a tick mitigation program and study at Indian Island County Park that will provide data and, ultimately, research to develop best practices for villages and towns in planning and combating ticks and tick-borne illness. We will also begin providing information to residents regarding tick mitigation and related issues via our new 311 system, the first suburban county 311 call center in NYS.”
- In response to Question 4, which asks the candidate to indicate their level of commitment to **Open Space Preservation**, the candidate responded:
 - o “residents. Since taking office as County Executive, we have preserved more than 1,000 acres of open space right here in Suffolk County.”
 - o “Last year we had a tremendous victory in our efforts to preserve open space when the state’s Appellate Division overturned a 2016 ruling by the state Supreme Court that returned essential and must needed flexibility to the country’s model farmland preservation program.”
 - o “Over 10,750 acres have been preserved in Suffolk County’s purchase of Development Rights program that was the first in the nation and truly serves as a

model for other preservation programs around the state. Over 19,000 acres are permanently preserved in preservation programs County-wide.

- o “Earlier this year I was proud to announce a deal to purchase the development rights to 27 acres of land owned by the Sisters of St. Joseph in Brentwood, NY so it can be preserved as farmland.
- In response to Question 5, which asks the candidate to indicate their level of commitment to ***Energy***, the candidate responded:
 - o “In the last 3 years we have upgraded a significant portion of our transit bus fleet to hybrid with the purchase of 72 new, state-of-the-art transit busses.”
 - o “I recently announced that Suffolk County is in the process of designing and implementing a county-wide bike share program to boost economic activity in our downtowns and reduce our overall reliance on automobiles as the sole source of transportation.”
 - o “I have also been proud to stand with Governor Cuomo and support investments in offshore wind energy to help reduce our reliance on traditional fossil fuels and invest in clean energy initiatives and businesses.”
- In response to Question 6, which asks the candidate to indicate their level of commitment to ***Sustainable Public Asset Management***, the candidate responded:
 - o “To date, the Suffolk County Farmland program has seen 10,750 acres come into the program and over 19,000 acres are permanently preserved in preservation programs County-wide. Suffolk maintains maps and records for the Suffolk County Agricultural District program which affords farms protection under New York State laws.”
 - o “Earlier this year, I was proud to announce a \$5 Million investment into Cathedral Pines County park that will make onsite facilities more environmentally friendly and the park more accessible to the public.”
 - o “I was extremely proud earlier this year to announce the reopening of West Hills County Park and the riding stable therein after it had been closed for nearly three years after we uncovered a major dumping scandal being committed at the park.”
 - o “Last month I was proud to announce the completion of remediation efforts and that the park will be opening back up any day.
 - o “In Suffolk County we have zero tolerance for illegal dumping of any kind in our parks and we will spare no expense to make sure that anyone who chooses to do so will be arrested and held to the fullest extent of the law.”
- In response to Question 7, which asks the candidate to indicate their level of commitment to ***Waste***, the candidate responded:
 - o “Addressing Suffolk County’s lack of advanced wastewater infrastructure has been a main focus of my administration and is critical for the vitality of our region. Under my leadership, Suffolk is undertaking the largest sewer investment in the County in decades. All told, Suffolk County will use \$390 million in post-Sandy state and federal funding to eliminate more than six thousand outdated cesspools and septic systems by connecting homes to sewers around four major river corridors in the

county.”

- In response to Question 8, which asks the candidate to indicate their level of commitment to ***Water Quality and Aquifer Protection***, the candidate responded:
 - “When I took office as Suffolk County Executive I made a commitment that I would make water quality a top priority of my administration. Within my first two years I publicly proclaimed that Suffolk County was facing a water quality crisis and that we had to take decisive action to reverse the decades of decline that we have seen in water quality.”
 - “We launched the Reclaim our Water initiative and took a comprehensive approach to the challenge. We worked with experts from IBM to develop a water quality plan. We secured nearly \$390 million in state and federal funding for new sewer infrastructure. We launched a groundbreaking new program to replace outdated septic and cesspools in existing homes. We overhauled our regulatory system to allow for innovation. We worked with local officials and Governor Andrew Cuomo to establish the Center for Clean Water Technology at Stony Brook University.”
- In response to Question 9, which asks the candidate to indicate their level of commitment to ***Natural Resource Protection***, the candidate responded:
 - “Thanks to a coalition of stakeholders, advocates and leaders, Suffolk County residents overwhelmingly supported the expansion of sewers into the Carlls River in the Town of Babylon and the establishment of a new sewer district to protect the Forge River Watershed in Brookhaven.
 - “Suffolk County will use \$390 million in post-Sandy state and federal funding to eliminate more than six thousand outdated cesspools and septic systems by connecting homes to sewers resulting in millions of gallons of nitrogen contaminated water from seeping into our ground and waterways.”
- In response to Question 10, which asks the candidate to indicate their level of commitment to ***Farms and Local Food***, the candidate responded:
 - “Last year I launched a new website, www.ChooseLI.org, a collaborative effort that seeks to raise awareness, advocate and inspire the community to support local and independent businesses on Long Island with a specific focus on agriculture and farm to table. Residents can ‘Take the Pledge’ and commit to spending 10 percent of their weekly food budget on local and seasonal food and beverages across Suffolk County.”
 - “The Choose LI website includes a complete mapping and inventory of all the farmstands, farmers’ markets, fish markets, vineyards, breweries, and cideries in Suffolk County for residents. Additionally, the website provides residents with information on what types of products are available during the season.”
 - “Suffolk County won the most recent court case in support of our farmland preservation program and the NY State Court of Appeals has denied the Pine Barrens Society (PBS) last request for an appeal in the lawsuit against the County’s Farmland Preservation program.”
 - Nevertheless, we are continuing to push for state legislation to solidify

support for the County's program and to protect the long-term viability of the agriculture industry here in Suffolk County. The Long Island Farm Bureau, the Peconic Land Trust, the American Farmland Trust, Cornell Cooperative Extension, the NY League of Conservation Voters, the Long Island Wine Council, Farm Credit East, Senator Ken LaValle, Assemblyman Fred Thiele, and Legislators Al Krupski and Bridget Fleming have all been important allies in this effort."

- o "As County Executive, I introduced legislation to implement an Annual Temporary Event Permit for vendors of shellfish grown or harvested in Long Island waters, which will include no fees for the first two years.