

## John Kennedy for Suffolk County Executive

In the field of psychology, projection refers to unconsciously taking unwanted emotions or traits you don't like about yourself and attributing them to someone else.

In the field of combat which is politics, such projection becomes the spin of attack ads, accusing an opponent of the very sins one wishes that voters would forget.

Welcome to the race for Suffolk County Executive in which incumbent Democrat Steve Bellone, who has spent and mismanaged the county into abject fiscal crisis and junk bond credit ratings, sees fit to accuse his opponent, County Comptroller John Kennedy, Suffolk's fiscal watchdog, of "feeding at the trough" and, horror of horrors, accepting the healthcare plan offered by his employer, the county!

It's no wonder that the Kennedy campaign embarked on a "Fiscal Reality Tour" across Suffolk's ten townships to contrast Bellone's out-of control spending with several well-run towns that have held the line on spending, and thus taxes, making life in their jurisdictions all the more affordable in these difficult times.

Bellone's claim to fame? He did not take pay raises or a county car. He's saved Suffolk some \$300,000, he boasts. Unfortunately for taxpayers, Bellone raised taxes and fees to the tune of \$200 million! And mismanaged finances into a spiral of bond rating downgrades.

That's penny wise and pound foolish, as the saying goes.

Moreover, New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli— a fellow Democrat — issued another pounding: a report citing Suffolk County for the most severe significant financial stress in the state!

In fact Suffolk was under the most severe fiscal stress of any county in 2018, with a score of 76.7 for the second consecutive year, according to the fiscal index in the report. It should probably have been expected with over \$883 million in debt over the past decade.

Bellone is right that he inherited financial problems when he was first elected eight years ago. But, far from making things better, his overspending has bloated payrolls and budgets; his mismanagement has made matters worse.

Despite the fact that the County's workforce has been reduced by nearly 1,000 workers, payroll has increased by over \$100 million. At the same time, the budget has risen from \$2.7 billion to \$3.1 billion.

The property tax levy has increased from \$532,765,964 in 2012 to \$652,108,097 in 2019. That is an increase of \$119,342,129, meaning that homeowners have seen a property tax increase of 22.4% over that time.

Bellone has hit Suffolk taxpayers hard with across-the-board fee increases. These fees — just another word for taxes -- include

the tax map verification fee, mortgage recording fee, residential/commercial burglar alarm fee, red-light camera fee, shopping bag fee, pet-grooming fee, and Department of Motor Vehicles registration fee.

He also hiked county park use fees every year since 2015 for camping, fishing, hunting, parking, group events and recreational permits. This disproportionately affects working-class Suffolk residents, including first-time homebuyers and those who rely on parks for recreational opportunities. Again, the Bellone administration has raised taxes and fees some \$200 million.

That's taxing on all of us.

Meanwhile, as Comptroller, Kennedy uncovered waste, fraud, and abuse in county government, saving taxpayers over \$55 million.

He's dedicated, determined, and tireless.

Kennedy started out as a blue collar worker, but earned advanced degrees at night. He gained his B.A. from SUNY Stony Brook, an MBA in Finance and Capital Budgeting from Adelphi University, and his Juris Doctorate from St. John's University School of Law.

His outstanding public service includes stints as a Suffolk County Legislator, a leadership role as Suffolk County Minority Leader, years as Official Examiner of the Title for the Suffolk County Clerk's Office, and now as Suffolk County



Suffolk County Comptroller John M. Kennedy, Jr.

Comptroller.

He knows Suffolk inside and out, from bottom to top. He married his high school sweetheart and raised his children here. Now, they help raise grandchildren. Those generations of his family — and our families — are a key motivation for his public service. He wants a future for them — affordable, desirable, and full of opportunity.

He'll help make Suffolk County a better place to live and work.

John M. Kennedy Jr. has demonstrated his leadership. He has a proven record of fighting to protect taxpayers and our Long Island way of life. He will continue to fight for us as County Executive.

***The publishers of the Messenger Review Newspapers wholeheartedly and unreservedly endorse John M. Kennedy Jr. for Suffolk County Executive.***

### We welcome your letters and opinions!

Please send your letters and opinions to: Phillip Sciarillo, Editor-in-Chief, Smithtown Messenger, P.O. Box 925, Smithtown, New York 11787.

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