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January 10, 2012

Affordable Housing

To the Editor:

We take issue with your characterization of Westchester County's affordable housing settlement in "Westchester's Desegregation Battle" (editorial, Jan. 1). Far from being "ultrawhite," Westchester is proud to be the fourth most diverse county in New York. It is virtually tied with Manhattan, in terms of percentage of Hispanic and African-American population, according to the 2010 Census. If Westchester were a state, it would rank seventh in Hispanic population and 14th in African-American population.

If there has been any "stonewalling," it has been by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which has held up \$7 million in housing and community development grants, hoping to force the county to do things not required in the settlement.

Despite HUD's roadblocks, Westchester is a year ahead of schedule in building the 750 units of affordable housing required by the settlement. Our success is attributable to working cooperatively with municipalities.

HUD would prefer litigation. That's not how communities get built.

ROBERT P. ASTORINO
Westchester County Executive
White Plains, Jan. 9, 2012