

# Conservation, education top Matusow priorities

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Fighting proposed budget cuts in environmental conservation and education, first-year Assemblywoman Naomi C. Matusow says she understands competing interests in state government.

"The problem is that we have a small pie with a lot of hungry people who want a piece."

Matusow, D-North Castle, who represents the 89th District in Westchester County, said environmental protection initially propelled her into community involvement.

When Matusow, originally from Nashville, settled down in Westchester in 1969, she joined the local League of Women Voters. She said even back then the league focused on environmental issues.

"Nobody was listening very closely, but the league was very much involved and I was very concerned," said Matusow.

Matusow said that preserving the environment is an issue that never went away. In fact, she says greater public awareness has increased the "urgency to protect our open spaces, our water sheds, and bring our air quality levels back to the levels that they used to be."

An associate of the Westchester Land Trust, Matusow said her constituents are particularly sensitive to environmental issues because her district has the most open space in Westchester County.

Proposed budget cuts in education that would affect her district also concern this former New York City public school teacher and guidance counselor.

"We are looking at a budget that has taken away money from an area that has received only 5 to 10 percent of state education funds these last few years. Yet it takes care of 26 percent of the population of school-age children, and we got 74 percent of the cuts," said Matusow.

Matusow is interested in a statewide income tax to fund education.

Another problem that Matusow finds frustrating is absorbing the enormous amount of information that comes her way. "I desperately wish for an eight-day week so that I might be able to get more done."

Matusow says she she knows she is not alone in this reac-

tion to White Plains in 1990.

Matusow divides her time considering issues involving the six committees she serves on. They include Environmental Conservation, Election Law, Transportation, Local Governments, Consumer Affairs and Protection, and Tourism, Arts and Sports Development.

One of the four women elected to the seven-member Westchester delegation, Matusow said this is recognition

of the fact that more women are running for office and being elected.

"I'm very proud to be part of the Westchester delegation because I think we will be a force within the body and able to speak out on issues in an effective way."

The assemblywoman and her husband, Dr. Gene R. Matusow, an ophthalmologist, have two children: Gary, 25, and Jason, 22.



Matusow