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NEWS RELEASE

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Censoring of Nurses is Sickening

The Republican caucus of the Westchester County Board of Legislators is demanding that County Executive Andrew Spano stop trying to censor nurses at the Westchester Medical Center.

According to published reports, the Spano administration refuses to accept an advertisement the nurses want to place on 30 Bee-Line buses regarding their current contract dispute.

The nurses, who have been working without a contract for over a year, were planning to display an ad that featured three smiling nurses with the caption "We save lives every day. Westchester Medical Center nurses need a FAIR contract. It's a matter of RESPECT."

A proposed change in retirement health benefits is one of the main sticking points between the New York State Nurses Association and the Medical Center.

"This is a blatant violation of the principles of free speech," said Minority Leader George Oros (Cortlandt). "It's bad enough that the nurses feel as if they have to pay to be heard but then the county executive decides if you disagree with him, he will silence you. That's just wrong in every way."

Legislator Sue Swanson (Mount Pleasant), a retired nurse, said the county's response was another tough pill to swallow.

"What's next? Will the county executive start outlawing medicine as he does with those who he disagrees with?" Swanson said. "I can hear him now declaring, 'No aspirin today. It upsets my stomach.' What nonsense!"

Legislators Jim Maisano (New Rochelle), Gordon Burrows (Yonkers) and Ursula LaMotte (Bedford) also criticized the Spano administration for needling the nurses.

"That's not how we do things in America," fumed Maisano. "I was a Marine and our troops now and in the past did not make the sacrifices they did so Andy Spano can tell hard working individuals, such as nurses, to shut up whenever he pleases."

"We already have a shortage of nurses and the county executive's contempt for our nurses can only make it more difficult for the Medical Center to recruit and keep the best nurses," he said.

Oros said it was a double standard that the county executive would try to gag the nurses when a few years ago he refused to shut down anti-Semitic propoganda at the Westchester County Center, contending he was defending free speech.