

Freeholder Director Tahesha Way

Written by Stephen Wilcox



Standing before a packed room of 350 supporters that included political heavy weights - Governor Jon Corzine, Lieutenant Governor Nominee Loretta Weinberg, State Democratic Party Chair Joseph Cryan, State Senator Nia Gill, Assembly Majority Leader Bonnie Watson Coleman, and Assemblywoman Sheila Oliver - Passaic County Freeholder Director Tahesha Way seemed every bit the veteran politician. However, she is not a long time elected official, and she is certainly not the typical politico. Rather, she is an Ivy League-educated working mother of three who, a few short years ago, was thrust onto the political stage after her community involvement, philanthropy, and resume caught the attention of Passaic County Democratic Chairman, John Currie.

In June 2006, Freeholder Director Way, a resident of Wayne, was appointed to the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders to fill a vacant seat. For Way, a practicing attorney and former English Professor, this was trial by fire as she had never held or sought public office. Moreover, after being appointed to fill the unexpired term of former Freeholder Lois Cucinello she found herself in the unenviable position of immediately having to run for re-election in order to retain the seat. She drew upon the skills that she honed as a litigator to mount an aggressive campaign that delivered the newcomer her first electoral victory.

Freeholder Way quickly developed a reputation as a hardworking, analytical, and effective public servant. Consequently, her ascension in politics has been swift. By the third year of her term, she had risen to Freeholder Director. She was also tapped by Governor Corzine to serve on the powerful New Jersey Highlands Council, which is charged with protecting New Jersey's water resources. Freeholder Way, a Democrat, has even cultivated a Republican following based on the emphasis she places on fiscal responsibility. Most recently, she received statewide recognition when news broke that she was on Governor Corzine's shortlist for Lieutenant Governor.

Now, as she seeks re-election to her second term, she credits much of her success to her parents, her children, and her husband. "I was fortunate to have two extremely hardworking and supportive parents who led by example. My father was a bus driver and my mother was a railroad clerk. They worked hard so that I could attend the best schools and have more opportunity than they had. And now I am blessed to have a loving and very understanding husband as well as three wonderful girls who also support me," Way earnestly explains. Freeholder Director Way's husband is former Giants Fullback, Charles Way.

In addition to her family, Way enjoys the support of a very influential network. Her fundraiser on Monday, October 26th at the Brownstone in Paterson was a veritable "Whose Who." Aside from Governor Corzine and the other political heavy hitters, guests included New York Giants General Manager Jerry Reese and his wife, New York Giants star running back Brandon Jacobs, all-star wide receiver Steve Smith as well as some of New Jersey's prominent business leaders. Nonetheless despite all of the high profile guests, front and center was Way's family who she effusively acknowledged and thanked during her rousing speech.