

Civic Engagement Remarks by Dutchess County Legislator Francena Amparo

People in America are waking up each day wondering what our elected leaders will do next. In a time like this, we can't let fear take over, we must take action. In his farewell remarks, President Obama urged us to "grab a clipboard and run for office." His message was for us to channel the disappointment and uncertainty we are feeling today into a spirit of action and power.

I became interested in running for office because I wanted to create systematic change. As an elected official, I have been able to advocate for my community and be part of the change. Running for office is just one way.

Voting is the number one tool that we can use to influence the political system. Register to vote where you live. Pay attention to your local races, we can strengthen the progressive voice by electing people to represent us.

Support your favorite candidates by volunteering. You can take your vote even further by becoming actively involved in a campaign. "Grab a Clipboard" and collect some signatures for your favorite candidates.

Engage your elected officials. Elected officials should be responsive to the people they represent. I personally want you to lobby me. As a County Legislator, I want to make sure that I am working on your behalf, so hearing from you is very important.

Attend a board meeting of your town, city or village officials. Visit your congressman's or senator's offices and let them know about your concerns. Attend the town hall meetings and public forums.

The pen is powerful too! You can write an editorial to your local paper on issues that you feel strongly about. Write letters and emails to your elected officials.

There is power in numbers. With so many ways to get involved we can help take back our government and our communities if each of us finds some way to get involved.