



# SUFFOLK COUNTY COMPTROLLER

## JOHN M. KENNEDY, JR.

### PRESS RELEASE

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## Kennedy Modernizes Comptroller's Office

### Comptroller Kennedy continues to bring government closer to the people with online “Citizen Self Service” solution

**Hauppauge, NY** – Comptroller John Kennedy will be unveiling a new reform his office has been working on, to modernize the functions of the Comptroller's role in collecting delinquent taxes. The new system, called “Citizen Self Service” allows Suffolk County residents to pay delinquent taxes online, through a secure website, using a credit card or online check. Kennedy touted the new system saying, “In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there's no reason why you should have to drive all the way out to an office, or put something in the mail to pay your taxes. Especially for the average working man or woman who works a 9 to 5 job, being able to log on to a website where you can pay your bills at any time of the day will be one less thing folks have to worry about.”

With the deadline for county residents to file taxes passed, the County Comptroller's office is now tasked with the responsibility of collecting delinquent taxes, combined with the fees and interest owed to the ten townships in the county. In previous years, Suffolk County residents needed to mail in a check or go to a physical location and pay with a check or card. This new service is intended to streamline these tasks. This is just one of a series of reforms made by Comptroller Kennedy to make it easier for people to pay their taxes.

Over the course of more than four years, Comptroller John Kennedy has made a point of bringing new technologies into the Suffolk County Comptroller's office in whatever ways possible. Remaining mindful of the county's current fiscal crisis, Comptroller Kennedy has still made strides to modernize the county's functions.

Since coming into office, Comptroller Kennedy employed chip readers for the payment of delinquent taxes. These chips, employed by new, more advanced credit and debit cards, are more secure than the previous magnetic strips used by these cards. These chips have been recently put in practice by banks across the country. By updating card readers to these technologies, the county has been able to provide a safer and more secure way to pay taxes.

Comptroller Kennedy has also modernized the ability to pay by check, through the installation of optical scanners, designed to speed up their collection and verification. New software used in conjunction with these scanners has allowed for the county's record-keeping systems to be automatically updated, without the need for a clerk to manually enter in the information. This has saved the county and the taxpayer both time and money.

These previous reforms, combined with the new, online Citizen Self Service, will make it easier than ever before for the taxpayer. Kennedy said, “We need to take a serious look at every aspect of how our government works, to make sure it’s working for the people of Suffolk County. The last thing anyone wants to do is pay their taxes. So it’s up to us in these positions that the people of Suffolk County elected us to, to make sure it’s not anymore irritating or cumbersome than it needs to be.”

Comptroller Kennedy has repeatedly worked to improve the Comptroller’s functions since taking office. In recent years, he has accelerated and streamlined the consolidation of the Treasurer’s office with the Comptroller’s office. The consolidation was approved by voters in a county-wide referendum, in order to save the county millions of dollars. Kennedy has also implemented a call center for the Comptroller’s office, complete with real-time data to help manage wait times and ensure quick service.

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