



County of Onondaga
Office of the County Executive

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County Executive Joanie Mahoney Calls on County Legislature to Vote 'No' On More Taxpayer Funded Lawyers

Legislature Budget has seen a 50% increase in the last 6 years and no cuts to positions

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – County Executive Joanie Mahoney is calling on the County Legislature to vote ‘no’ on Local Law A. The Local Law would grant authority to the Onondaga County Legislature to unnecessarily create its own separate legal department – an expensive duplication of services already provided to them by the Onondaga County Law Department.

County Executive Joanie Mahoney said, “This unnecessary duplication of services is the exact wrong direction for our community. When most governments are looking for opportunities to share services, the taxpayers should not be paying for the creation of new, redundant services.”

In addition to this local law authorizing the duplication of an existing department, the Onondaga County Legislature has routinely authorized and funded the position of “Legislative Counsel” in its budget. It was the Legislature’s own Legislative Counsel who drafted the first version of this law which passed unanimously in the Legislature and then, ironically had to be corrected by the Onondaga County Law Department due to legal and technical inaccuracies necessitating a veto. It’s a perfect illustration for why the professional County Attorney’s Office should continue to draft legislation as it has done for over five decades.

Furthermore, in 2011 the County Legislature authorized and funded 7 support positions for 19 legislators and in 2018 funded 9 support staff for 17 legislators. While the County Legislature has increased its budget almost 50%, or \$973,109 in the last 8 years, the rest of County government has worked to do more with less including a reduction in headcount of more than 1,000 people.

“We are proud of our ability to provide high quality services to the taxpayers of Onondaga County while also cutting the tax rate to historic lows. Unfortunately, the County Legislature has gone in the opposite direction,” said County Executive Joanie Mahoney. “The taxpayers deserve a lean, efficient County government and that is what my team has worked to provide the last 10 years. The Onondaga County Legislature would be wise to do the same.”

County Executive Mahoney continued, “Our community has endured multiple frivolous, political lawsuits for the last several years and at a high cost to the taxpayers of Onondaga County. As I have said often, our community must find a better way to communicate than through unnecessary litigation. This legislation will undoubtedly open the floodgates to more lawsuits and political stunts that will produce nothing more than misleading headlines and costly legal bills. Our hardworking taxpayers deserve better.”

The County Legislature will vote on the local law at their next meeting which takes place on May 1st, 2018 at 1 P.M.

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