



Onondaga County Legislature

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING - TENTATIVE 2010 BUDGET OCTOBER 8, 2009 – 7:00 P.M. OnCenter Ball Room

IN ATTENDANCE: Legislators Lesniak, Meyer, Rupprecht, Stott, Rapp, Rhinehart, Buckel, Corbett, Stanczyk, Holmquist, Kilmartin, DeMore, Warner, Jordan, Kinne, Laguzza, Masterpole, Williams

Ways and Means Chairman James Rhinehart called the hearing to order at 7:00 p.m.

MARY WINTER, Taxpayer – statement on file

DEBBIE WRIGHT, Hillbrook – statement on file

DAVID HOLDER, CVB:

In the context of the difficult choices facing Onondaga County it may seem odd to be talking about tourism. However, we have an industry that is fearful of what the future holds. Representing the industry today is David Heymann, the General Manager of the Sheraton and President of the Greater Syracuse Hospitality and Tourism Association; and Doug Snavelly, the General Manager of the Double Tree Hotel Syracuse. These businessmen are concerned about the twenty-two % cut proposed for the funding for the Syracuse Convention and Visitor's Bureau. With room tax down by about 11 %, cuts are expected. However, a cut that is double that amount is detrimental to the long term success of this industry. Our organization has shown our ability to deliver a turnaround investment. You know the importance of this \$777 million a year industry that employs roughly 12,000 Onondaga County residents. These proposed cuts will have a trickle down effect on all of these businesses and many others, not to mention the tax savings of about \$574 per household that tourism generates. There are some other alternatives and certainly we are there to help explore them.

MARK WIERZBICKI, DSS:

I am the Coordinator of Investigations for Onondaga County. We want to talk about the impact that cutting 5 hours a week out of the County employees' time. What kind of impact that is going to have; and the way I am able to tell you that is by telling you what we do. In 2008 we conducted fraud investigations and the results of those investigations were the ability to close and reduce cases that had cost \$6.5 million dollars. (*inaudible*) We've disqualified over 400 people a year from participating in programs, and that's a savings that the County is not paying out in benefits of a \$500,000 a year. We get payment agreements that total \$350,000/\$400,000 a year and we've actually collected this year \$160,000 on fraud accounts. I don't know if anybody saw the news today but this morning at 6:00 there was a fraud raid done with the District Attorney's office and local law enforcement. We arrested 28 people. We have outstanding warrants for another 16 people, and another 75 people got letters from the district attorney's office. The fraud involved in this particular raid is \$700,000 and by our current standards; by cutting those hours per person per week; we are talking about losing \$1.1 million in savings to the County. So, I hope that that information is taken into consideration when the proposal is there for cutting the County hours down.

CAROL AMIDON, County retiree:

I am an Onondaga County Retiree with 26 years of service, 14 years of which were represented, and 12 years as management. I was also a past President of NYSAC Budget Directors Association. I came this evening because of remarks made in our local papers by Mr. Rhinehart. He seems to have a total disregard for over 2,000 families who are facing a 14 % cut in pay. Since he believes that everyone must share the pain, I can only assume that he intends to cut legislative and management pay by the same 14%. Well, enough of my

attempt at levity we all know that's not going to happen. When the union contracts were approved by the Legislature and the Executive Branch, the deficits were already being projected. The County Executive then expected the union to waive the negotiated increases. When the union refused, she proposed a 14 % pay cut - sound vindictive? It does to me. On the other hand; Onondaga County can no longer provide its current level of services without tax increases. We must privatize and/or eliminate some of these services. Van Duyn needs to be privatized as a government entity. We cannot deliver the service as cost effectively as the private sector can. In addition, we do not need to be concerned about a safety net. Federal regs provide that you cannot discriminate based on the ability to pay. When you sell an asset you need to accrue for the Van Duyn's retirees' health benefits so that the County no longer has to fund those. Should the County maintain and oversee ball fields rather than pay its employees a livable wage? Can Onondaga Community College incorporate some of the parks department duties and to its travel and tourism curriculum, i.e. the Salt Museum, Ste. Marie's? Since it is the Management's right to set work schedules we need to ensure that we are maximizing that effort. In other words are we scheduling business building maintenance on a rotating work schedule or on overtime? These are just a few suggestions for cost savings. There are many, many more. Naturally as you define services the County can no longer afford to provide; staff and administrative areas should be reduced. Let's suppose you decide not to save 2000 families. How will you justify to an administrative judge what happened to 10,000 hours of union work per week? No judge assigned to this labor dispute would believe that 10,000 hours per week would suddenly disappear and all along you have no (*inaudible*) your employees. What are people thinking? Management is only as good as its staff; they need to feel value, but they don't under the new administration. In closing, I encourage all legislators to take actions necessary to save 2000 employees from a 14 % pay cut, loss of dental insurance, and a reduction in retirement earnings. Your employees deserve better than this budget offers.

BILL FISHER, Deputy County Executive:

County Executive Mahoney does not want to see work schedule reductions in 2010. My grandfather was a president of the local Union and I don't think he would be very proud of the way this is. She wants the entire work force to work full schedules next year. Joanne asked all County employees to work full schedules at their full salaries in 2010 but at 2009 salary levels. By decreasing salaries and paying a little more towards the cost of health insurance the County work force would have contributed 8 million toward the 38 million budget gap in 2010. Our sheriff's deputies and members of the building trades stepped forward to do their part and they will be working full schedules in January. Management employees including the County Executive also agreed to give up their raises in 2010 and pay a little more toward Health Insurance. As a result they too will be working full schedules next year. Unfortunately CSEA and several other bargaining units representing the vast majority of our employees refused to give up raises in 2010 in return for full work schedules. As a result, the County Executive has not been able to achieve our shared goal while eliminating all work schedule reductions in the 2010 budget. We have had many productive discussions with CSEA negotiators in recent days. County Executive Mahoney put a substantial offer on the table yesterday and asked for a meeting today to discuss the CSEA's response. Thus far we have received no response, although the CSEA told us this afternoon that they hope to have a response for us by the end of today. With the CSEA's leadership here tonight in full force we are hoping that they will have time for a meeting with the County Executive before leaving town.

COLLEEN WHEATON, CSEA:

I'm the Central Regional President of CSEA. New York's leading union! I am proud to be here tonight to see over hundreds of our members in solidarity with 3,200 Onondaga County workers who we represent. The solidarity you see here tonight with all our members wearing black, holding signs and wearing stickers is proof that our members are united here at Onondaga County. No one is holding them hostage. No one is tying their hands, and no one is telling them what to do. They came here tonight to send a clear message. We are all essential workers. We are providing vital services to the taxpayers and this budget full of bad choices for the community we call home and the services we provide. In this economy we cannot cut our way out of this recession. At a time when people are more dependent than ever on our services we cannot afford to cut work hours, we cannot afford to lay off workers and we cannot afford to reduce public services. Simply put, we cannot afford this budget. Our members did not cause the problems we are facing in Onondaga County, but as always, we have been willing to step up and work to be part of the solution. What we do not stand for is allowing this budget to be balanced upon the hard working men and women and their families who stand before me. As our elected officials, we look to you for responsible leadership and to come up with the right solution to fix this bad budget. We are looking forward to working together with you to make this happen. And we did call Mr. Fisher this afternoon and tell him that we will have to look into ...I next week, not today.

PHIL GRAHAM, CSEA:

As I said outside and earlier tonight I have never been so proud to be a union worker. This budget process has pointed out a crisis in leadership. Simply put; our members do not have confidence in the County Executive's ability to lead us in the right direction. You should be aware that morale is at an all time low. Thanks to the way the budget process has been played out. Instead of putting all her efforts into working cooperatively with us to come up with a solution that we can all live with, the County Executive put much of her efforts into trying to turn our members against union leadership and divide us. We are here tonight to show that we will not be divided and we will not stand silent! We will not allow her or anyone else to play politics with our members' lives. Even though we do not cause this recession we have always offered to help with the County to be part of the solution. So far most of our suggestions; which amount to millions of dollars of savings, have been resisted or ignored. Our members are here in large numbers tonight to send the message that we will not stand for union busting. Or allow Onondaga County to go back on the promises made last year by the Mahoney Administration to our workers. We will not cave in to unreasonable demands and make along with threats giving us the feeling like we have a gun to our head. We will stand together and we will stand strong. We also will not stand for misguided efforts to cut our work hours, layoff dedicated workers and reduce services to taxpayers. In this economy it makes no sense to put our people on unemployment or on social services roles. With a deficit based on the use sales tax; it is important that our members cannot spend money in this County if they don't have jobs. As Colleen has said, we cannot cut our way out of this recession. We understand that times are tough and what people are going through in the private sector. That's why we are willing to put our part of the solution but that doesn't mean that we are going to join a race to the bottom just to see how much worse we can make it for the County worker. Again, we will not stand silent while people try to balance the budget on the backs of our workers. Our workers come to work every day. Nobody comes to Onondaga County to get rich. Our workers come to put food on the table and pay for their mortgages. We come every day to make this County a safe place to work and to make Joanne Mahoney look good. We want the Legislators to stand tall and to make the right decision on Tuesday.

CARMEN CHURCH, Taxpayer:

I've been in New York for twenty years. I moved from California, and do you know what? I'm still glad I'm here; I'm very glad I'm here. However, I do not understand how Joanne Mahoney can be so out of touch with the services that we provide to the community. Now we may not provide the services to some of the community that votes, however they are citizens of the community. Students who do go on to get educations, students who go on to become great football players. Now, I say to Joanne Mahoney. Where are you Joanne? And to Mr. Fisher, our battle isn't with you. You just came in at a very bad, bad time. Now, I myself, I was extremely insulated to have to go through security when we work in the building. Insulted that county employees have to go through security. Our battle is with her and I say to the County Legislators do what is right because you know its right, not because it is an election year.

BERNIE MENT – STATEMENT ON FILE

BONNIE LEFF, Children's Division – STATEMENT ON FILE

GLEN STONE, Probation:

I have been a County employee since 1976. I have never been so embarrassed with what's been going on with the union. Folks you know what to do. Don't be afraid to break party lines. Don't be afraid to break county/party lines. We've got 60 to 65 million dollars. It's raining outside, use it! We've got a contract right here that Joanne Mahoney signed that she had for months; couldn't she have bothered to be here? She signed it. Is her word worth anything? If she breaks contracts with us, what about all other things that she has contracts for; do they mean nothing as well? Do fish get the money? Do the elephants get the money? Do the penguins get the money? What do people get? Joanne can hire all these people for top pay, and then she orders Stickley furniture that she bought and sound proofed her office with our money, the Taxpayers. So you know what to do, you know the right thing to do it. We work in probation -- our budget is cut so much --we work our tails off. Is Joanne afraid not to lay us off because her people don't? She doesn't care about us; she cares about herself and her people. Well we turned down her 3.5% now we're grappling with 14%. Unless she's got a serious problem, she's out to get us, you know? She wants to hurt us; has the same characteristics that terrorists use.

TONI BROUCHLE, Canteen:

My name is Toni Brouchle; and I am a Youth Services Coordinator for the Town of Cicero, and I oversee the Canteen. Sam Weaver is a student at CNS and so is Kim Kazel and the three of us came here tonight to talk on the Student Assistance program. Now I don't know much from unions. I don't know much about all of the other political stuff that's happened in the room tonight. I do know youth services and for me the idea that a service that is needed so desperately by the kids of our community is being looked at and the plan that they came up with to be able to help in the budget just doesn't make a whole lot of sense to us. I am extremely grateful for the funds that we have to keep the Canteen open every day and the County has been very supportive in making that happen. But the reality of looking at Student Assistance that serves young people to keep them functioning and getting through their careers, s students, being cut in a way that they are proposing could be extremely detrimental to the mental health of the kids. Not only the kids but the thought process that a school district as large as the North Syracuse Central School district could go from having three Student Assistant Counselors to one - and the poor soul that that one person is - and I know she's here in the audience - that would have to serve 2,000 -2,200 kids not even knowing the kids that she's serving, what about the mental health of that one person? So, I understand budgets. The Canteen has been on the verge of closing many times, and I understand that tough decisions have to be made, honesty I do, but we need to come up with a better plan than the one that we have in place with the proposed budget right now. I'm going to let Sam Weaver and Kim Kazel give you a quick plea regarding their services, and I'm going to ask that the County Leg understand that the relationships that we have with the County workers here in Onondaga County has been nothing but supportive. They have gone out of their way to help us in any way they possibly can and we stand here in support of them in any way that makes sense.

SAM WEAVER, Student Assistance

I have been seeing my Student Assistant counselor for the past three years now; and I honestly don't know where I'd be without her, I don't think I could make it through high school without her. My life has changed since I have seen her. I would probably have dropped out of high school or I would have been expelled for the rest of my high school year and what would I be to make of my life if I was getting in trouble. They are a big help and people don't realize that not all of us are able to talk to our parents and it's really hard and so they are there for us because we all need an adult in our lives and I honestly don't know where I'd be without the canteen or the student assistant counselor. I would probably be in juvenile or something because they've been there, I know that know that no matter if I can't talk to my parents, I always have an adult that I can go to in school or go to after school and it helps a lot because kids are your future.

KIM KAZEL, Canteen:

I attend CNS and I have been seeing my student counselor teacher for about two years now, and I know a lot of kids think that their parents want them to be perfect and, but we're not perfect, and we do mess up sometimes. I've had a lot of trouble growing up and just to know that if something goes wrong I can turn to my Student Assistance counselor and turn for help, and they sit there and help you and not judge you for anything, and it's very helpful, and it makes me feel safe that I can tell somebody about something without it getting around and me being judged about who I am. I don't know I'd probably be kicked out of school by now if I had not been seeing my Student Assistance counselor because I do have a lot of anger issues and they have helped me learn that fighting is not the way to do it. They help me; they guided me through my junior high school years and now my high school years, and I have no idea what I would do without them. When I was in junior high, I had a lot of issues with people because of what I look like, or the way I talk, or where I came from with my background. Miss Lake, in the Junior High, helped me a lot with my problems that come from when I was little. Why would you take away from that when kids really need that? They really need that emotional support to get them through.

JAMES ROWLEY, CFO – STATEMENT ON FILE**DEB WARNER, Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce – STATEMENT ON FILE****NIKKI SMITH, Student Assistance Program –STATEMENT ON FILE****JAMIE CAPRILOZZI (200 student petitions)**

As a senior at CNS North Syracuse and I stand in front of you all tonight to encourage you to continue the funding and the staff of the counselors. It may help teens in school that battle issues of suicide, eating

disorders, family problems, teen pregnancies, drugs and alcohol and the list goes on and on. Each one has an effect. The student assistance counselors help the teens in finding what's causing their problems and help them fix it before it affects them seriously both mentally and physically. It's the same; it's the same way with cutting the funding for the programs. Students will get the help they need for their problems because most of them don't have the money to help out that school. If they can't get the help, the problem will be an effect that cannot be helped and the affect will become seriously, mentally or physically. Over the past two years I've gotten to know Ms. Allington and Mrs. Lettinger on a personal level. When they stopped off and became the advisors of Images at CNS...I will tell you guys what I said to them. I've seen the affect they have on the students at CNS not only in the classroom, but outside of it. I can't find words to describe what they have done for not only my classmates but some of my friends. Students are always welcome and they see counselors every single day who need their help. I've even gone to them a few times and talked. It's hard for a teen to go to parents and really open up with their opinion and their reactions. The counselors open up their minds and ears to what they have to say. Think about it in a different way....if it was your child would you want them to suffer and try to deal with their problems without professional and mental help without counseling services? You wouldn't would you? Now imagine how the parents and students who see the counselors on weekly or a daily basis feel. I have about 200 signatures by residents of Onondaga to keep the funding. (on file)

LAURA KINLOCK, Student Assistance Program – STATEMENT ON FILE

VICTORIA RYDER - STATEMENT ON FILE

CECE HERMAN, Student Assistance Program – STATEMENT ON FILE

SHARON STEVENS, Student – STATEMENT ON FILE

LAURA KINLOCK, Student Assistance Program – STATEMENT ON FILE

SANDRA DIBIANCO, NSCD BD OF ED:

For twenty one years I've been a member of the North Syracuse Central School District's Board of Education. I came to the district at about the same time the Student Assistance Program came to the district. I would refer you to a beautiful letter that was written by Mr. Pat Leon which appeared in today's *Post Standard* which says far more eloquently than I what the program means to the children. I'm here to ask you to restore the funding, not just to our district but to the other districts involved. This program is unique in many respects; whereas to look at shared services as a means of conserving resources and funding. This program is a perfect and successful example of just that. It has been successful in the 25 years it's existed. Only one district has withdrawn from the program. Other districts have gone to family programs. You must also understand that the cuts that you're making are draconian to this program. The young lady who spoke earlier said that replacing it with a life skills program would be similar to replacing dinner with a condiment. To say that this is a replacement for onsite counseling for the confidentiality to this safe place to deal with emotional issues is insane, ludicrous. Beyond that you must understand that in taking away the student counselors, you will be taking all the student counselors from every site. My colleague from Baldwinsville here would have to leave a relationship that she has established over two decades to come to an area where she's not known. One of the strengths of this program is the relationships that have been established by these counselors with the students with the staff, with the community. The referrals that they get are self-referrals, from the kids, from friends of the kids who are referred because they are worried. The kids have problems and issues and very often a friend will encourage a youngster to come because it is a safe place where people are trusted. That doesn't happen overnight. If this program is cut you will not even save \$60,000 this year because you are going to have to pay twenty-six weeks of unemployment. I read in one of the articles that you've restored \$250,000 to the fish hatchery; and far be it from me to be against conservation, or fish, or any of those things, but I think that kids trump fish any day of the week! I understand too, how very, very hard your job is. I have to do, on a smaller scale, the same job you have to do in terms of making some really tough decisions in terms of budgets. Several years ago when this issue again came to the forefront, I think this is my fifth or sixth time in coming to the defense of this program....the school districts, in order to keep this program, agreed to increase their share of funding to 75% of the salaries. I believe we were at 54% at that point in time. The bang that you get from this buck is tremendous, and the losses that will result if you discontinue the program are even larger.

CAROL GOEHNER, North Syracuse School District – STATEMENT ON FILE

ARLENE FORDOCK, Retiree – STATEMENT ON FILE

PHIL CLEARY, North Syracuse School District

I'm here to talk about the Student Assistance Program as well. Certainly there are very few things I could say that would provide as much impact as the students and teachers who work there. In schools our Student Assistance counselors see our students on a daily basis. I'm here really to tie things together as a life-long resident of Onondaga County and as a taxpayer. I do happen to be a teacher and a union member; but as a taxpayer and listening to the arguments this evening, I think if I had to describe the plight of our students and the wonderful services they receive from the Student Assistance counselors, it would be hard to convince an outsider that this was a wise choice. If I told someone from the outside 25 years ago Onondaga County came to schools and asked schools to collaborate with them to provide frontline services, confidential services, for our students for the express purpose of reducing costs and improving quality of life for our County. If I told somebody that over time, funding that the County provided reduced to the point that the vast majority is now paid by the school districts and at this point, at this point in time, the County government would suggest that cutting \$80,000 would make sense. That \$80,000 would in some way make up for the wonderful services that we are giving our students. That \$80,000 that we would save now would replace the future costs of, as Carol said, mending a broken adult. I heard from someone recently that the cost of incarcerating someone in our county jail for one year is \$80,000. Thousands of counseling sessions are held each year and I don't think it takes a mathematician to realize that; of these thousands of students that are receiving these services, that without them any one of those students might need to be incarcerated. So I would ask our County Legislature to please reconsider these cuts and to help support the kids.

JIM FRIO, North Syracuse School District – STATEMENT ON FILE

DEBORAH WILLIS, 18th Ward Dem. Chair – STATEMENT ON FILE

JAMES HERNANDEZ:

I am a Probation Officer and I have been with the County for 22 years now. I work as a Deputy with the Domestic Violent Sex Offender Unit. If I do my job correctly; I am speaking with victims; I am speaking to the victims. I don't think there is anybody on this panel here; maybe I'm wrong, who has ever sat down with the victim of a sexual assault; face to face, for forty-five minutes and let her speak her mind or his mind because the court case has been plea bargained. If I'm doing my job correctly the field probation officers are safer because I identify people; who they live with, their criminal patterns, their drug abuses, and their weapons histories. If I do my job correctly, the community is safe. The sexual service is a mandated service - dedicated to protecting the community and rehabilitating the offender. I work with sex offenders. People don't want to hear that, but sex offenders - people treat them like the scum of the earth - but we have to treat them like people because they are people. They've done horrible things. But we have to rehabilitate them in the community, because sending them to prison is not going to do this. We work closely with Vera House and other private providers to provide rehabilitative services to them. Not only do we work with sexual offenders -- about 1/3 of the work, but 1/2 of the work that I do is with domestic violence. That doesn't catch the newspapers that often or happen so much, but sure you're going to read about the pedophile priest, sure you're going to read about the teacher dating a student, a massage therapist that went too far. That's sensationalized news, folks. That's not what happens. Most of what I do is domestic violence. Have you ever listened to a 911 call? Have you ever seen crimes and pictures from a murder scene where someone was killed? I have. This is hard work. It is essential work. We have to distinguish between what is essential and not essential. \$250,000 for a scoreboard for the crunch - nice - but not essential! \$250,000 for the fish is nice, but it's not essential! I was at Jazz Fest this year when Joanne Mahoney got up on stage at the Kenny G set and said that the County staged Jazz Fest by earning the money allocated for the building of the new sewage treatment plant. That's nice, because I had a great time. I would have gladly paid admission, but it's not essential! I've been married 30 years; I have never spent \$25,000 on furniture! I sit on the desk with inmates and I would suggest that when it's Mr. Fisher's turn to have his office decorated - he might want to take a look at the Corcraft catalog.

FRANCIS MOSCONI, Health Department – STATEMENT ON FILE

EILEEN KRAFT, DSS – STATEMENT ON FILE

PATRICIA BUTLER, Probation – STATEMENT ON FILE

PATRICIA HARMATIK, Probation – STATEMENT ON FILE

EILEEN ROUMPAPAS, DSS – STATEMENT ON FILE

GLORIA HOLLAN, CSEA – STATEMENT ON FILE

MARK SPADATORE, 824 2nd Street, Liverpool:

I would like to thank the Legislature for the opportunity to speak today, and I think that there is a gripe that we've have heard from all the speakers today is that this is really bigger priorities and what the priorities would be when putting together this budget that you're going to have to vote on next Tuesday; and as we think about these priorities, we need to think about what kind of County we want to live in; and I'm speaking today against the proposal to eliminate the Human Rights Commission. The Human Rights Commission should be a priority for this County. First off, it's a very small department - only four people. At it's height it had sixteen people working for it. Right now, they only have one full-time investigator, one contract supply substitute, their executive director, and clerical person, and most important a chair of the Human Rights Commission. For me, I came to the Human Rights Commission because I'm a firm believer that worker's rights are human rights, but as I worked with the commission, I found the work that they did was so vitally important to the whole community; to make everyone in this community feel that they are a part of it, to make everyone feel welcome to this community; and when there is something that is unjust they are going to speak out for it. Now I found that there is a friend of mine, Gary Salinger, who works for the County. Him and I, both go to St. Joseph the Worker Church and our priest there, Father Charlie Major, was just saying to me... "God doesn't make the good stuff easy," and the Human Rights Commission doesn't make our life easy. What they do for the County is that they hold us and our community accountable....and I know that they hold us accountable is very hard because they say, "Why do we have to listen to these four people stuck in the Civic Center. Why do we have to listen to these people? Because they are part of our community, and a part of who we are in the community. We should be welcoming everyone; regardless of their race, regardless of their religion regardless of their creed, regardless of their sexual orientation, regardless if they're union or non-union. We should be embracing everyone. To take away the Human Rights Commission is basically saying that we cannot value that, we do not value our community I ask you, this County Legislature, take the time to do our work for our community.

GARY MORRIS, SR. , Human Rights Commission:

I guess I'll start off by just starting off saying that old slang; what do they say on the commercial? "CSEA... that's where we are." But listen, I'm, here today to talk about the Human Rights Commission. Now, that department is so critical to not only our community as a whole but to all that we stand for as Americans. Julius Edwards will do a fantastic job at that department. What I want to say today to the Legislature is this...as a victim of discrimination, right here in Syracuse... and look it up - Morris vs. Central Regional Transit Authority - as a victim of discrimination with nowhere to turn but New York State, I guarantee that Central is right now saying to their self, "We messed up, we messed up..." because they didn't have anything in place, where people who looked like me will have somewhere to go to address their issues; and they paid for it. That's the bottom line. But it's more than just race. We talk about the Human Rights Commission. We also talk about sexual harassment; and what I'm going to come back to this paper here and I see, I see all these males and then I see Kathleen Rapp, and I say to myself where can a woman go when she feels sexually harassed? "Come on Kathy, keep it real, girl!" Isn't that what they say? We need to understand one thing about the Human Rights Division; that this department in a small little corner office of the County when I was a budget analyst under Jim Rowley over there. They have been trying to cut this budget for a good while. And I must say, I, by no means, I didn't want to cut then, and I do not want to cut now. As if I looked over at - he had to look at his name - Casey Jordan, my Legislator, in Clay, - Hopeless. I know that vote is gone, but I say to all the other Legislators there, look at this from a holistic standpoint, and think about what you are doing to this community as a whole. Think about the women, Kathleen, that go somewhere else to escape. Think about the County Law Department; can we put it to the State. They do come back out. Think about these issues. It's not easy what Julius do, but he does a great job at it. There's a lot of people who don't like what he did, but we can no longer be a pariah to racism, sexism, and classism. We need to know that a Human Rights' arm is there for everyone, and everyone should make sure this stays. So in closing, I'd just like to say this, to the CSEA members that are here, just remember one thing people, just because they look like you, doesn't mean

that we always carry your values. Sometimes it's important to know that someone who do not look like you may carry your values further than someone who do. When you look over there, we see why an American, we see two females, and I'll let you guess at the rest. Okay, you guess at the rest, and think about their positions as they sit there with a stoic look on their face, thinking that human rights will be destroyed because that's what they are doing. They are destroying you, me, and you Kathy.

TOM BURGESS, Protective Services, CSEA – STATEMENT ON FILE

REV. ROOSEVELT BAUMS – STATEMENT ON FILE

DAVE SPIELMAN, Probation:

I'm a 30 year County employee. I supervise the Domestic Violence and Sex Offender Unit for the Onondaga County Probation Department. I want to thank the Legislature for inviting me and my fellow workers here tonight. I do find it a little curious that we were greeted by metal detectors, when we've been trying to get metal detectors in the Civic Center for years. We have, in the probation department, a vault full of weapons that we take off of people every day on our floor. Maybe we can have you - apparently you have the power to pull out the metal detectors and deputies - to assign us some help in the Civic Center where we have convicted criminals by the hundreds coming every day. But metal detectors are not the reason that I am here tonight. In my 30 years I have never seen anything to compare with what we see here tonight in this proposed budget. It is absolutely disgraceful, and it's a shame that we have to even be here tonight to discuss this. I have a small team of eleven probation officers under my supervision. They deal with some of the most threatening life crisis that are out there in the community - Domestic violence and sexual abuse. I have an officer assigned to the very worst of the worst level two and three sex offenders with a case load that allowed him to see these individuals weekly and make unannounced spot visits in their homes. We've uncovered many violations and we've had several people going to prison; keeping this community safer than it was before. His job now is doubled in number and we've told him that he can't see people once every week; he's going to have to see many of these people once a month because of the cutbacks; because the little secret that hasn't been mentioned here or I missed it tonight; isn't that we are talking about cutbacks down the pike. They have been happening for over a year, and when you talk about a reduction of 51 jobs in addition to us losing basically a day a week; almost a day a week. I don't know how we are going to provide - We are not going to provide the services that the community thinks that we are providing for it, and someone - needs to say that. There has been conjecture of County employees being selfish, money grubbing, employees because they are holding out for their 3%. We are not holding out for 3%. Those of us that have been here for a few years know the contracts or should I say, lack of contracts, which we have had over the decades, because we exist under the Taylor Law, and this Legislature and the County Executive saw fit to leave us heading for years, many times with no contract for over a year. Now we finally have negotiated a contract. It's not great but at least it's coming close to meeting a livable wage, increased cost of living; and the County Executive's name is on it and I think yours are too. Does that mean anything? Occasionally, in my office, I have officers bring people in who they have an impasse with and we have to have a little conversation. This is with criminals... I'm talking about honesty and living up to your word--that when you say something the currency of truth is what's needed. You may have disagreements about something, but if you speak the truth we can work things out. There was a contract that was signed by the County Executive and this Legislature and we expect that you are going to live up to it. I'm embarrassed that I have to say that to criminals and I'm saying it here again tonight. I'm looking forward to this committee getting together and working out a fair and equitable budget. I've written two letters to my Legislator that I haven't heard back from yet..Casey Jordan, but I hope that after you consider my prospects tonight that or during the week, Casey, you can give me a call on the phone number that I put on those letters and we can discuss the prospects. And I hope that everyone that is here tonight makes sure that you don't turn just out for this meeting but that you turn out and vote.

RUTH BOSHART, Air One Project Lifesaver:

I would like to thank you for having us all here. I am here not as a County employee; I am here as a retiree, as a caregiver. I am here in support of Air One. I am the one that is responsible for bringing Project Lifesaver in to Onondaga County and making it available to caregivers. Now for those of you who don't know what Project Lifesaver is, it's a life saving program that we work in conjunction with the Sheriff's Department, and Air One is a vital part of that department. What we do is we look out for the most vulnerable part of Onondaga County. We look out for the seniors that have Alzheimer's disease, the seniors that have various types of dementia; we look out for the autistic children. We look out for the children and adults that have Down's syndrome, even for

the insulin dependent diabetics. Anyone and everyone that has occasion to wander away from their home and aren't able to return. That's where Project Lifesaver comes in. It is a very new program; and I am happy to say that with the help of Project Lifesaver here in Onondaga County we have nation wide returned in excess of 2,000 people, safely and comfortably to their homes. We would have lost a lot of our prized residents. My husband, Ronald, was the first person in Onondaga County to wear a Lifesaver bracelet. He was a wanderer. My husband today is in Van Duyn. He is a total invalid. You can say it doesn't happen to me; it always happens to somebody else, and that's not true. It happens in nearly every family at some point. You can say it's only the old people, it's not. My husband is not old by any means. What we do with the help of Air One, when someone disappears in the County is that we are able to go out and look over a 14 mile radius to find these people. Air One works in conjunction with the State Police Helicopter. State Police fly during the day. Air One flies at night. Most of the things happen, unfortunately, in the evening or at night. You don't want to be the parent, or whomever, of a young person who has been involved in a very serious automobile accident, has traumatic injuries. We don't have a helicopter available to take that young person, or a senior, to the nearest hospital for care. They can expire before they can get them there with an ambulance. With Air One we are able to go out and pull people out of Onondaga Lake or Oneida Lake. We are able to go out and fight grass fires; all kinds of things. You can go to the Sheriff's website and see a complete list of every chore that the helicopter has done; and when I stop and think that you are going to take away the piece of mind of the 52 families right here in Onondaga County that rely on Air One to find their loved one should they become lost or separated I don't want to be the one to have to go out and say; well, now we are going to have to disband this program because the Legislature has cut the funding for Air One. I ask each and every one of you people here, each and every one of the County Legislators here tonight, to stop and think if it was your mother, your father, your child, or more importantly your spouse, how would you feel if this vital service was cut? Also, in closing, I cannot say enough good things about Van Duyn and the staff. I see quite a few familiar faces here tonight from Van Duyn. They are the ones that are caring for my husband today. I had him at home for eight years. It came to a point where I could no longer do it. He required more care. When you talk about closing Van Duyn, my question is, what are you going to do with these 500 people that reside there? They are not all elderly people. There's a lot of very young people there that need the resources that are provided through the CSEA - the nurses, nurses' assistants, the aides--everyone that's involved. I can't imagine what we would do without them, and I say that on a personal basis.

JEFF HARREP, Taxpayer – STATEMENT ON FILE

ANN JAMISON, CNY National Org. of Women – STATEMENT ON FILE

LINDA HALL, HUMAN RIGHTS

I was the Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission from 1992 to 2008. So I am not speaking to you as an Onondaga County Employer. I retired from that position and it was probably one of the nearest and dearest pieces of work I've ever done in my life. It's hard standing here because the first year that I was hired in 1992; the Human Rights Commission faced complete cut of all financial funds in the budget process and it just saddens my heart to see this continue to happen. It seems like every time there is a new Director they seek to take all of the funds away, and so I have been following it in the newspapers. But one of the things that I noticed that they wrote in the paper is that there has been an assertion that the Human Rights Commission is a duplication of the New York State Division of Human Rights. Let me just set the record straight on this. The entire time I was Executive Director. Yes there are two branches that deal with human rights in Onondaga County. The New York State Commission of Human Rights does accept cases, supports New York State Human rights law. However, their staff has been cut just as our staff has been cut. If you called them, you would probably wait several days to two weeks to get a response to get an appointment to come in their office. If you call the local commission in Onondaga County you will have the opportunity to speak with a person the same day. You will get responded to within usually the same day or twenty four hours. You will be able to meet with someone if you are losing your job. If you are faced with a pressure situation on the job, if you are faced with losing your house, your apartment; you can have your intervention happen the same day. You cannot get that from New York State. It reminds me of the time I went to LeMoyne College and they were doing a black history month program and someone came up and said, "You know this is kind of like Rosa Parks. You know she was sick and tired of riding in the back of the bus. I got up next and I had to speak, and said, "You know I've got to beg to differ with you here. When you are oppressed racially - If you are oppressed because you are poor, if you are oppressed because you are a woman, you can even be oppressed as a white man. You don't get sick and tired, you get SICK and TIRED. You get sick and tired of it

day in and day out and it often takes hours or weeks or months of this oppression coming down on you when you finally stand up and you find the courage and you find your voice and say, "I can't put up with this anymore!" That you speak out; that you need to be heard; and you need to have action. So, here we are, we take a person in that situation; they finally find their voice, they finally find their courage. How would you like it if after you went through all of that, and we tell Rosa Parks, "Could you wait a couple of weeks to see someone to take your statement?" No! The local Human Rights Commission is like an emergency room and by defunding that organization you are taking away the emergency room. So, one of the issues was around the New York State vs. local. There is not a duplication of services. Secondly you are talking about defunding the Executive Director. There is an investigator; there is a contract compliance officer. You have to have an Executive Director. Are you going to send a soldier out in the field to negotiate with captains, generals, colonials, with other State administrators, with County office heads? No. You need an Executive Director in order to back up what the staff does. You need an Executive Director to build relationships and negotiate what needs to be done. The last thing I just want to say is - Is there also room in this budget to get rid of the supportive staff? You have a contract compliance officer that is doing mandated work. Her job is to collect and do the data entry to collect that information, and certify payrolls as mandated into a system. You are going to do away with her? How can you keep up with that mandate to do that work if you get rid of the staff? The staff has already been cut down to a bare minimum. I beg you, do not decimate this office. It is important. It is critical. These employees are - they are all essential staff. Thank you very much.

BILL CUDDY, Human Rights Commission – STATEMENT ON FILE

SHIU KAI CHAIN, Human Rights Commission –STATEMENT ON FILE

JOE TARTURO, DSS, CSEA

Proverbs 18:16 states that "A man's gift makes room for him and breaks in before great men." Obviously this is Old Testament and I ask my Legislator, Ms. Rapp, as a female, also before women. The message that I want to give to the Legislature today is that county workers have done their part. Make no mistake that poverty, aging and youth problems, neglect and abuse reach every part of our county. In the twelve and a half years that I was a child protective worker, I investigated just as many incidences in the county as I did the city. Over the last 10 or 12 years many of my county employees through retirement and attrition and left open positions that are gone. We are speaking of just about 400 people; almost a 40 % reduction in work force numbers from 10 years ago. So I say again that county workers have done their part. We have continually; been asked over and over again to pick up the slack; to review ways to get services to those who need them. And I tell you we have. As county workers, taxpayers, and homeowners in Onondaga County; we have all conserved and cut back on all types of things; on purchases, on trips, on future plans. We have cut back yet to save more money to help our children privately as we help the children of this community publicly. We struggle to pay our school taxes. We struggle to understand that assessments seem to rise every year for no substantial reason so yet we pay more property taxes. And again, I say yes, county workers are doing their part. CSEA negotiations and talks have revealed an offer of a hand full of ways the county can save money without illegal furloughs or layoffs. We have presented a RX drug and prescription plan that realistically could save the county \$500,000 to a million dollars a year. The union has also shown the county by their own statistics how we can save hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars on retiree benefits for all active employees. The County has refused to act on those cost saving measures. Again, I say to you that the county workers have done their part. In their first 8 months of this year I have traveled over 6,000 miles on behalf of the youth that serve in the children's division. I have put more than ten hour days; I have done more than ten hour days, in totals that I have. I have strongly advocated for the needs of those youth as have every one of my workers in the Children's Division; and we have done so sometimes very tiredly, but we have done it happily because it was the right thing to do. I thank my friend, Tom Buckel, for doing the right thing and allowing me the opportunity to talk to him one on one. In ending, I would like to tell you a story. A young couple moved into a new neighborhood; and the next day while they were eating breakfast, the young woman saw her neighbor hanging clothes outside. She made the statement, "The laundry is not very clean. She doesn't know how to wash correctly. Maybe, she needs better detergent." Her husband looked on, but remained silent - bright man. Every time her neighbor would hang her wash to dry, the young woman would make the same comments. About a month later the woman was surprised to see a nice clean wash on the line and she said to her husband, "Look she learned how to wash correctly. I wonder who taught her this." Her husband responded, "I got up early this morning and cleaned our windows." And so what we see when watching others depends on the purity of the window through which we look. We ask you the Legislature to

look in clarity through the window that we have provided. I can assure you that what I have said here on this podium tonight is the truth. The savings offers that we have presented to management are real and will save the county millions without layoffs and furloughs. We will not be able to deliver the services that the county needs with fewer hours or personnel. You've heard that statement over and over again. County workers have indeed done their part. We are asking all of you now, to put aside any partisan differences to come together. To purposely look at what we do, in departments such as aging, adult services, building and grounds, caregiver resources, community development, health, highways, Medicaid, libraries, parks, sheriff's, social services, temporary assistance, WEP and on and on. We ask that you fervently look at ways to cut without layoffs or furloughs. Lastly, remember that we are hundreds of thousands strong and we will be watching.

REVEREND KEVIN AGEE, Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse:

I stand this evening in support of the Onondaga County Commission on Human Rights but before I say what I wanted to say in support of the Commission of Human Rights; let me say parenthetically; as I sat and listened this evening to those persons who spoke before me and listened to those who have spoken in favor of the county workers, and all of the other issues that were addresses here this evening. I see two very disturbing trends. One of those trends, is that, it appears that this budget proposal, proposes to balance the budget on the backs of those who are the least able to bear the brunt of (*inaudible*). And that is unjust and wrong. The second common denominator that I have witnessed here this evening is listening to some of the departments that appear to be the hardest hit by the sacrifices that you are being asked to make. It seems like many of those workers who will be hardest hit by this budget proposal are actually serving a population who would derive great benefits from a viable Human Rights Commission in this county. The last thing I want to say about that issue before I address the issue that I still have to address is, and it is very difficult for me to come towards the end of the speakers to reinforce something without being redundant; but I will be bold enough to do so. But one of the young men who spoke earlier espoused a value that I learned to practice a long time ago as a parish pastor. I have been a parish pastor for more than two decades. And the principle that the aforementioned speaker addressed before me is this...I never asked my congregation to do anything that I am not willing to do myself. Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, inasmuch as you have asked the county workers to take a 14% cut in pay and a great reduction in fringe benefits; I advise you, do not ask your supporters to do anything that you are not willing to do yourselves. A very great and subtle presence has come before me and articulated the great need for the Human Rights Commission very clearly. I will not be repetitive and I will be brief and then I will take my seat. The Declaration of Independence of our great Nation reminds us that all human beings are endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights. Those inalienable rights are the rights to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. Therefore, with that in mind, I must say, that any repeated effort to dismantle the Human Rights Commission in such a heavily populated area is hypocrisy. Let me also say and I will say this as respectfully as I can...several persons who spoke before me earlier have alluded to the vast myriad of human rights violations and complaints that the Onondaga County Human Rights Commission handles. I am a newcomer to this area; I am a transplant. Even though I'm a well-experienced pastor, social activist, and community organizer, I've only been in this community for just over two years. And in just over two years I have witnessed some very publicly advertised violations of every type of human rights violation that was alluded to earlier - just over the two years that I have been here. It was said that the Onondaga County Human Rights Commission is duplicating services that the New York State Human Rights Commission can provide. It's already been stated, that there is a letter that has come from; of all places, the New York State Human Rights Commission, which very strongly refutes that argument and renders it invalid. My friends, some wise, many wise people have said, that you can know tremendous details about any entity by living at its budget. Your budget, the way you spend your money, speaks volumes as to your values and your priorities. In the New Testament, Jesus said it like this, " For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Now, my esteemed sisters and brothers of the Legislature; I know that as public servants, all of you are people of good will and I trust that none of you would ever do this intentionally; but the fact of the matter is, I'm a broadcasting major, undergrad, and the Google journalist, Marsha McCoolican, once said, "The medium is the message." So my friends let me say to you publicly in love, whether it's intentional or unintentional this budget proposal transmits the message that in your heart you do not care about the basic human rights of the citizens that you have been elected to serve.. I promised to start out to not be redundant and to save my speech. Many people have spoken before me. In the Old Testament, the Old Testament writes in multiple places, quoted the Lord, Our God as having said, "They that have ears let them hear." Thank you and God bless you.

KRISTIN JACKSON, Probation:

I am apparently a non essential probation officer. I'm not going to talk about all of the policies and issues and information. I think my coworkers did a great job doing; some of the junk about me. I never have gotten up in a public forum like this speaking , but unfortunately my Legislator wasn't at home so he didn't call me back or return any of my phone calls or emails; and I'm not bitter about that. I know you guys are really busy. Last year my husband was laid off a week before Christmas. We had some really hard choices to make just like you guys do right now. We thought and thought and we thought, and you know what we didn't know how long we were going to be laid off. We had this brilliant idea to use our savings account because after all, that is why we had it. Not once did it cross my mind that I would not provide the essential services to my daughter that she needed like her food and her diaper changes. Eventually we were able to build back up our savings. We were basically responsible. We put money away. We didn't spend money on Stickley furniture. I understand that my personal finances are not the same as the County's. I'm fully aware of that, but at the same time, it seems so elementary to me, that we wouldn't use the savings account that we have towards this budget. I know we can't use it all. I understand that the bond rate is of primary concern of using the County's reserved grants. But in the research I've done, and I'm by no means a budget and finance person at all, it seems to me that the bond rate is not based solely on dollar amount in the bank account but it's based on business practices, and the unemployment rate and several other factors. So I think that you can just say we can't use the savings account because our bond rate will go down. I know that you guys are getting a lot of pressure from the private sector, but I think that it's important to remember that we're not the private sector. We're public employees that provide essential services to all tax payers and we're also taxpayers. We don't get merit increases or Christmas bonuses when times are good. We get simple cost of living raises. So in closing, I really hope that you guys will consider using the rainy day fund instead of devastating 2100 families plus my own of the essential services that we provide to the community.

JOHN GOMEZ, GOMEZ MECHANICAL CONTRACTOR:

I am a heating and air conditioning contractor in the City of Syracuse and the County of Onondaga. A month ago I was, the State recognized me as a minority contractor. Being a recognized as a state minority contractor; I'm entitled to work on county projects now, whereas before I was only allowed to work on city and private jobs. So, now I go from a job to a trade. With a with a job, you can feed yourself for a day; with a trade you can feed your family for a lifetime; because if you teach your children, your children's friends, it's just like being in a union. You know it's just like your trade. You bring your children up to say I worked for the County so therefore you can work for the County also. So, here with my business as being a minority contractor while working for the County I will be the first minority contractor in the heating field. Now I am able to work on projects at the zoo when they come about because before there was none. Now contractors get them; I cannot meet my minority goals that the State and the County say you must meet because there was none. They cannot use that anymore, now there is one; and with me, how many people that look like me come and fix your furnace every day. Not that many. I have been doing this since 1995. I am the second black here in Syracuse to work on furnaces. I worked for Peace, and then I went on my own. It is a trade. With this particular trade now I can do rate work and rate work is higher than minimum wage work. So therefore, I will be able to help not only my family but other families that need help because people need to make more than minimum wage. Nobody in the County works for minimum wage--no one. No one in the Legislature works for minimum wage. So no one wants to work for minimum wage. Everybody wants to better themselves. Before I was a janitor and I was forty-four years old and I went back to school and I learned heating and air conditioning. Because why? I was not satisfied with the hand that I dealt myself. You see no one deals you a hand. Well you have a hand that you're dealt with, but it's up to you how you play that particular hand. Once I got tired of being a janitor, I decided I wanted to do better, and I went back to school. So it is never too late to go back to school and learn a trade. If you get laid off, go to school; learn a trade, because with a trade you can feed yourself for the rest of your life. It's not a black issue and it's not a white issue. It is an economical issue that we are facing. So we all are going through the same things. And the most important thing is for the Legislature to do the right thing. You know, there is an old saying that you must walk a mile in a person's shoes so you see what they are going through. So Legislators before you make your decision, go home and think about if you was in that position what would you do? Because people have some tough decisions to tell their children. Hey, I can't do this and I can't do that. Why? Because they are laying me off. But to the people; if you get laid off, hold your head up high, and do what you do best, that's fight, don't give up, don't quit. There is no time too soon to quit. Never quit; because if you fall down, fall down on your back looking up; because if you look up you can get up. Don't fall. Have a blessed day.

JUDY CARR, Co. Employee – STATEMENT ON FILE

PATTY COST – STATEMENT ON FILE

MICHAEL HULCHANSKI, Probation – STATEMENT ON FILE

STEPHEN WOWETTO, Project Healing Waters, Co. Federation of Sportsman, Iroquois – STATEMENT ON FILE

JULIUS EDWARDS, Human Rights Commission – STATEMENT ON FILE

ANISSA CLEMONS, PROBATION OFFICER:

Hi I'm not here to speak to the crowd. I'm here to speak to you folks. In the last five hours, I've watched you guys look out there. Only occasionally have I seen you people crane your necks to look at the people at the podium. So, I'm coming to you so that you can see my face and listen to what I have to say. I am a voting taxpayer from the Town of Dewitt. I'm a volunteer with the Jamesville Fire Department. I'm a caregiver for my blind father and disabled mother who live in Minoa, and a mother and a provider for my four beautiful children, who are under the age of 8. I have just given up my entire night with my family. I missed putting all four of my children to bed. I just called home and listened to them cry because they miss me. Because they don't understand that mommy's here tonight because I'm about to lose 14% of my salary. I may not be able to put food on the table tonight because I'm already living paycheck to paycheck. And I'm living paycheck to paycheck because I chose to be an Onondaga County Probation Officer; which I've been since March of 2007. Currently I'm assigned to an investigations unit completing state mandated pre sentence reports. The law requires that a pre sentence report be completed every time someone is convicted or pleads guilty to a crime. You can't get away from it. It has to be done. It is a task that I struggle with along with all my fellow officers to get done in our current thirty-five hour week. It is impossible for us to do it with five hours less each week. It won't get done. If we can't do it we are going to have to ask for adjournment which means we are going to clog the court system, which means those people that are already incarcerated are going to sit longer in the jails; which means we are just going to hold up the system even more. And why is it impossible for this to get done in the current 35 hour week? Because of our case load being so high.. And why is that--because we have staff shortages, because our current vacancies have been left open. This past year our department was asked to cut four people. We had nine people retire and we are not filling any of those positions. Talk about shortages and cuts next year they are already here for the Probation Department. Just since being transferred to the investigation units in March of this year, I have completed reports for 9 individuals convicted of murder or manslaughter. I have completed 5 reports of people convicted of attempted manslaughter, assault or vehicular manslaughter in which the victims were shot, stabbed, or run over with a vehicle in which that victim is currently permanently disabled, still unconscious in the hospital, and lost his leg. I've also completed in that time, 25 reports on people convicted of sexually abusing young children. I spend the majority of my day speaking to the families of those victims, trying to give a voice to the dead, an avenue to the families for their anger, their grief, for their or emotions that they don't know what to do with. For what..a few pennies? It's not for the money. It's because I know I'm doing something to make my community safer. It's because I love my community and I take pride in the work that I do. Previously, before being transferred to the investigations unit, I was part of the Violent Sex Offenders Unit in which I supervised the case load of approximately 75 sex offenders across all of Onondaga County. A task that required more than 35 hours a week, and a task that will be absolutely impossible with the recommended thirty hours after that five hour cut that Miss Mahoney has recommended. At times I chose to complete paperwork on my own time, off the clock. Almost every week I put in time and didn't bill the County for it because I thought it was more important to be out doing home visits after my four children were in bed. I would tuck them in at night and then mommy would go back out to work from 8:30 to 11:00, midnight, 1:00, 2:00 in the morning knocking on doors to making sure that the sex offenders were at home, instead of out on the street, or in the bars, or in the strip joints; and I'm not talking about the City of Syracuse. I had clients in Dewitt, East Syracuse, Manlius, Mattydale, Cicero, North Syracuse, Liverpool, Baldwinsville, and Elbridge. They're everywhere. They're in your neighborhood; they're everywhere in the County. And the eleven probation officers that have strictly that case load and every probation officer who has probationers that are sex offenders that aren't specifically on a sex offense. It is our job to keep this community safe and we take that job very seriously. And for all of the things that I do, and my fellow coworkers do, and continue to do, to keep the citizens in this county safe - we've been labeled non essential? So what, now I'm faced with the possibility of losing 14% of my income? Like I said, I'm already living paycheck to paycheck. I've got four young kids at home that I have to support myself. Fourteen % of my income means

which one of us goes without clothes, which one of us goes without food? I don't know about you, but I know exactly who it's going to be in my house, It's going to be me, everyday, because I will put my four young children first. When are you going to put your workers first? As a taxpayer, as a resident of this county and an employee, I am asking all of you the Legislators, to oppose Ms. Mahoney's budget proposal. I'm asking you to vote in support of community safety and ongoing services by keeping ongoing county employees in place, by using the budget reserve, the rainy day funds to balance this budget and don't do it on the backs of us employees!

CHERRY LAMP, Aging and Youth:

First of all I'd like to say to you over there that 16 years ago on November 1, my sixteen year old son committed suicide. Now, if you think that by taking the assistance out of the schools is going to make a difference; you are going to make a definite mistake. Because the suicide rate in this country is growing. I happen to be a board member of the American Foundation for the Prevention of Suicide and it is unbelievable that you would even begin to think of taking counselors out of the school to help children. And the segway to my being a SCEA employee; I happen to be a member of the health and wellness committee of the county; and in July in a meeting that we had, our EAP representative from Crouse reported that the depression rate among county employees is as high as it is in the winter time when it is usually high. Summertime is usually a good time because the sun is out. His reasoning was that we had a pretty bad summer. Well, you know what, I don't think so. I think the reason that there is depression in the County Employees is because we are afraid we are not going to have jobs. We are afraid we are not going to be able to pay our bills. We are afraid we are not going to be able to take care of our families. I want the people of Onondaga County to know that Civil Service Employees work for you. We are civil service. Our jobs are to maintain services for each and every one of you and keep Onondaga County a great place to live. Those of us who work for Onondaga County are dedicated and responsible citizens. We pay property taxes and as voters we helped elect you to your positions. And some of us even helped to elect Joanne Mahoney. Now was that right? Are we to be forgotten so quickly? We are single men and women, single parents, married couples, grandparents raising grandchildren, men and women working a part time job on top of working their county job. We are working men and women who support spouses or partners that are ill and who can't work. We are all sorts of people. We are everybody. We are just as much the private sector as we are the public sector. We don't deserve this. We work for our salaries. Yes, we certainly are blessed to have a job and to have good benefits. But we pay for those benefits. We pay union dues; we pay a portion of our pay for health insurance. We pay our taxes just like everyone else. We have good insurance, but our premiums and co pays continue to rise and with the projected plan of the County Executive our dependents will be losing their dental coverage. Will our premium go down for that health? I doubt it. If we are not here doing our job; who is going to get the services out to the community that so many Onondaga County citizens rely upon. Civil Service employees help senior citizens, the disabled, veterans, youth and a lot of other people too numerous to name. Everyone likes to enjoy themselves in the county's parks. They like to take advantage of free literature and assistance. They want all of the services that have always been there to continue; but yet the County Executive wants to cut the hours of the civil service. There aren't enough Civil Service people working in the county now to get all the jobs done in a timely manner. Citizens expect their services now, and that would be even more difficult if we are forced to work a thirty hour week. We are not making big bucks here. Some of us are fighting to survive. We weren't just handed our job. We had to take a test to be employed. Where did the public ever get the idea that somebody elected me to my job? I'd like to know. I had to take a test; and I had to wait on a list after I lost a job in the private sector. There are other options that would save money. A proposal has been made by the CSEA Chair - medications through Canada. Who's getting the kickback from the pharmaceutical companies, so this plan may be rejected? A four day work week could be implemented, saving money and not having the County buildings running at full capacity. Half the time we are freezing and the other half we are so hot that we can't stand it. What a waste of energy and money. There are surplus monies in the rainy day fund that could be used to fill in the deficit. Well, look out people; it's pouring out there. How much rain must fall before competent decisions to use some of this money; which is tax payer money, to help us out? There are a lot of jobs that were just created in the county system since the new administration took over; and they are not CSEA jobs. They are management positions. Why were these jobs created? Exactly what do these people do? Maybe there should be an investigation made in to how many positions have been created from the (in audible) CSEA. There are jobs that could save taxpayers a lot of money. Onondaga County is quickly heading toward being a work place with too many managers and not enough workers to accomplish the goals of the department. If you are receiving services for non essential employees; I believe that these positions would be a good place to start looking. County workers that do the work is not the answer to the crisis in this

county. As leaders and citizens of Onondaga County, you should be proud of the CSEA employees that come to work every day and work to make your life better in this county. The CSEA civil service workers are the backbone of Onondaga County. Would you cut off your arm just to save a little time in getting dressed? I want the Legislature and citizens of Onondaga County to see that just because we wear the label CSEA we are normal people just like everyone else in the county. We are not greedy, money grubbers out to make millions of dollars. We are everyday working people who have children and grandchildren and problems just like everyone else. We didn't create the deficit in this county why are we being punished for the overspending that has been done in this new administration? We aren't the ones who spent the money. Do not believe that by cutting the county work force and their pay that you are solving the problem. There is money being wasted in this county, but it is not being wasted on the people that serve you and serve you well. I am dedicated to my job and I do my very best everyday to make a difference to the people in this county because I care. I may be naive, but I'm hurt that people I thought would make a better Onondaga County are willing to sell a large number of their constituents down the river for their own gain. It comes down to what is the morale thing to do; and we've heard it out there earlier tonight. A lot of people believe that there is no rallying war in politics. So I plead with you, the leaders we have chosen, to prove to Onondaga County that you do want to do what is morale right. Will you stand behind the civil service that gives their all to the county. That you will honor their contracts, keep them full time employees and prevent the unnecessary layoffs. There are always two sides to every story, and we, the CSEA employees of Onondaga County, are the other side; and do you know what? Sometimes the other side is right.

BRIAN DWYER, Probation – STATEMENT ON FILE

MARYBETH OSBORN-O'BRIEN:

I was almost going to leave a little while ago for a few reasons. My co worker, a probation officer and friend, came over and encouraged me to continue; because I noticed that you all started paying attention again. I have been a County of, Onondaga County employee for twenty-two years; with the Probation Department for the past fifteen years, and before that with Child Protective Services -- been with Onondaga County, for 25 years, have a couple of kids, pay taxes, and I vote. From hearing what a lot of people have been saying this week, and I'm not quite sure, that I don't blame you at all, but I'm not quite sure that you understand what we do for a living, day after day after day, year after year. People talk about probation supervision with a set (*inaudible*) -- and it's in all of your neighborhoods. It's no longer just within the city, the crimes; but there are other things that Probation does with criminals; it's not just the law enforcement aspect of monitoring and assessing the safety of the community. The burden is also on us to try to attempt to rehabilitate criminals so that we decrease recidivism. We are working our butts off. We work hard it's a mission that we have. Obviously we are not in it for money. We don't get paid a lot of money. (*Inaudible*)...to cut to social services? You don't want to go to take people's children out of the home you're trying to work with. It is essential work that we do and it is very insulting to hear that we can't dip into the reserve fund when I know that a lot of the vacancies in probation due to retirement is part of that reserve fund. Four million dollars would help balance the budget is the figure that I heard and six million maybe it's gone down to 55 at this point. If one of the, Mr. DeMore had mentioned to me, because I live out in Fabius, "but we can't dip into that reserve fund because things are only going to get worse," When we have economically hard times, statistics show, crime goes up; child abuse goes up, elderly abuse goes up, mental health issues increase. We are only going to have more work. I am joining my coworkers routinely to swipe out a lunch go right back to our desks and keep working—routinely to do the paperwork. The rehabilitative work that we try to do for the Latino population for example, I'm one of the Board Probation Officers that speaks Spanish. The services are lacking so much in this community, that if you have someone who is severely depressed, sex offender, involved with domestic violence, if those services are not available, that is part of our job; playing counselor/law enforcement. It's a lot of work we do, and I think that we do it really well. and I think that the statistics show, of course there's always room for room for improvement, but to insult us, for Joanne to insult us by saying we want you to write the union to reopen this contract, when we have already sacrificed by doing so much more with less. I'm not sure that you all realize that we work very hard above and beyond what we are expected to and we don't get paid for it; and it is part of our tax payer money, so I urge you to go back to it rather than to contemplate for one second that this community is going to get better with decreased hours for all of the employees.

CATHY BROCHU, DSS ADULT PROTECTIVE:

I come here this evening, first as a concerned community member, and secondly as a county worker. I have served our community for more than three decades; twenty-one of those years working for county government.

If services and workers are cut, it will result in the following: elder abuse will increase, deaths will occur, mental health services are not offered to those in need, if mental health services are not offered to those in need we are going to have bigger problems than we already have and will not be serving that population. Child abuse rises in all areas, which would include physical abuse, neglect and sexual abuse. Crime increases, cost of incarceration is costly. In closing we owe it to the memory of Erin Maxwell and (*inaudible*) to provide our community with the services, rather than cutting the services and workers.

RICK OLANOFF – STATEMENT ON FILE

ROBIN AUGELLO, Co. Parks – STATEMENT ON FILE

AL KALFASS, WAVES – Executive Director

I'm the Executive Director for the Waves Ambulance. It's my full time position, well a little more than my full time position. Mostly I'm the volunteer Director for the Onondaga County Sheriff's helicopter. I was really concerned a couple of weeks ago, when I saw Mr. Rhinehart do an interview on News 10 Now about possible duplication of services for the Sheriff's unit's helicopter. I sent him an email; he did reply, telling him my concerns and the other thing I was thinking, is, "Here we go again." It seems like every five years there's another cycle of going after the Sheriff's helicopter. I want to make clear that I'm not a County employee. I receive no income for my services to support the Sheriff's helicopter. The flight team who services the helicopter receives no income as well. The fifty-seven fire departments we serve, all the citizens in the County and sometime we in the County, are benefiting from this service. I can go down a list over the last twenty plus years of the services this helicopter provides. I can bring up several patients that we have flown in. I can introduce you to family members of several patients that are no longer with us. I have statistics for years past. I can sit here and tell you numbers. The bottom line here is, it saves lives. We have had several people speak to you tonight about increased crime rate, sexual abuse, job loss, worried about how they are going to survive. I really don't know what to comment on that part of it. I feel really sad and very concerned about this community and the county residents. On the other side, of me I'm thinking - oh great there goes our call volume because that's exactly what's going to happen. It has happened over the last ten years. Our call volume continues to rise, the search efforts for this unit continues to rise, and we constantly talk about cutting it. I believe everybody in this room tonight is a public servant or service. There are several who are not here tonight that volunteer on a routine basis for fire or EMS that work two jobs and give back to their community. I know several of them are in the profession of being paramedics who make on the average of \$13 to \$15 an hour for years of schooling, who work sixty hours plus a week trying to support their families and their kids. I also know that several of these people volunteer, because we have such a decrease in volunteers across the scope of our profession. I did some rough figures tonight, and I was looking at, based on basically a \$500,000 budget, which I would like to thank the Sheriff, the Under Sheriff, and all of the Sheriff's department personnel for doing their tests to keep this valuable service. They have definitely given over and above in my eyes. But, let's divide the \$500,000 budget. Let's take about twenty-two air medical transports that were done last year not to mention several rescues, and divide that by the budget figures. That basically equals anywhere between \$22,000 - \$24,000, and I don't want to say per life, I want to say per life outcome that drastically had the potential to change their family's lives and the individuals' lives. Earlier we had a young lady come up here and speak about Project Life Saver. Fifty-two families are involved in that project. I've seen this project. I'm thankful that I have not been on call to use it as of yet. But I do know what it's like to look for somebody in the back swamps or even the city. For somebody who doesn't know where they are, who blends in and just keeps on walking, and a lot of us/people just don't notice. I believe this service alone, is a valuable part of this unit. The mission factor of the sheriff's helicopter, whether fire, police or EMS, is not a duplication of services. We currently have four; I should say three services in the area; one being for supply the other being the State Police helicopter and of course Air One. Air One is the only multifunctional aircraft we have. It supports fire, police, and EMS missions as a whole. We have a similar counterpart which we work very well with, which is the New York State Police out of Hancock. They do not have a cargo hook on the bottom, they do not do fire suppression. I do not see, in my career as a volunteer fire firefighter for structure fires and for the use in the air. I am not positive they offer that service or not. I do know that the other service we have in the area is Mercy Flight Central. All three services, provide outstanding medical care, however, none of these three services, except for Air One provides the complete package. I am deeply concerned that these cuts are the beginning of an end. I know it's not slated to be terminated during this budget process but I'm very concerned that it is forth coming. I really appreciate that the Legislature takes a look at all of the resources that this

aircraft provides and the people that provide it; and most important look at the volunteers that allow this unit to be our guardians.

BARRIE GEWNATER, CNY Chapter New York Civil Liberties – STATEMENT ON FILE

DAVID STEINBERG, ONONDAGA COUNTY FIRE CHIEF:

I guess I will be the first one to say good morning to everybody--five hours and I've learned a lot. I'm David Steinberg. I represent the County Fire Chiefs Association which represents the 57 fire departments of this County. To repeat, what I would like to talk about tonight briefly, I promise you; they are all life saving and public safety issues. One is Air One. It does police, fire, EMS work, police work, and check the buildings, crime, chase cars, whatever, and it's obvious that the police do a lot beside that. It forms a very valuable EMS tool. If somebody is in an accident or injured in your area in what we call the golden hour requires medical care. For contacts, ground ambulances and fire trucks to get across this county, it could take upward to an hour. Air One it could be ten or fifteen minutes. You save time, you save a life. Fire wise...the brush fire a couple of weeks ago in the Bridgeport, South Bay area, they did the work in one vehicle what probably would have taken five - ten fire trucks to do and probably ten times the amount of people that Air One had. It's a valuable tool; it's different from any other helicopter, bird, that this county has access to(*inaudible*). The other thing I want to talk briefly about is the budget cuts on Emergency Management. Until they cut the (*inaudible*)... volunteers on the job that they don't get paid for. Lastly again it's about public safety issues, the 911 center, the budget cuts there with the new County rates (*inaudible*)...looking forward to (*inaudible*).started in the county homes which have been moved to bigger systems which will record more people and less people.

VIVIAN MOORE, Human Rights:

I'm exhausted; I know you must be. I've been away from the community for a while, and, I'm saddened to think that you plan to eliminate the Human Rights Commission; because I served three years from 88 to 91. The statement prior that I heard from the ACLU captured what I think the Human Rights has been (*inaudible*), and why I took leave from the Syracuse City School District to do that work. I'm also shocked that we don't pass on information about what good organizations do that are misunderstood. That is this whole centering around things that I heard when I was there that this is a duplication of State action. How can intelligent people still believe that? I hope maybe one person spoke out of turn and the rest of you just didn't speak up; because I don't understand how you could not know what this is about. So let me share with you just a couple of things that I learned when I worked with Human Rights so that you can get an affirmation of the kinds of things that go on there. I learned that this is a Commission that bridges people together to help understand what even our language does not tell us. It was an issue of power. One of the shocking things that I discovered was that there was so many women in this community who had such painful experiences in the workplace around sexual harassment and the reason that this is so painful and not just because this is a personal experience for me, as a woman to know to what they were talking about was because these women were caught in a trap of having to support their families; and having to make money, to work, to make life better and to have been harassed in their jobs and they didn't want to talk about it. Unlike what most people think also, people don't just get up every morning and say, "Let me see if I can think of something to say that they would certainly think was meaningful. People would come in and have legal complaints that I could actually refer to the State Human Rights Commission and they would not want to name it. They would not want to say it, sex harassment. They would not want to say its racism. They would not want to admit that they had been discriminated against because of disability. People were in pain. They were hurting. So, I say that it may seem like a big budget to you but it's fully understaffed for the County's promise of.. (*inaudible*)... that needs addressing. There a couple of things I want to say to Kathy, that really highlight what we need to say here tonight, but I guess I should reiterate my thoughts and what I've always said on the Human Rights Commission. It's in the nature to deal with not the letter of the law but the spirit of the law, and you should really know the pain for the little bucks that you spend on this and someone said it tonight to eliminate the law suits that come up, and come out of this because this is an agency that teaches and if you can think of how the Human Rights Commission improves the education program has trust in this State - many of our nonprofit organizations have grown and couldn't have grown in speaking to the issues of exclusion and discrimination at the extent of the law. Those are the things that improve the quality of life. Those are the things that, while they don't make us accountable, actually heal a place and helps us grow. I would say that I ...(*inaudible*), and I live in the county/town too. When I first got here I didn't know the difference. I came from Houston so everything is Houston, all of Onondaga County and probably Oneida and Oswego too would still be in Houston. So, I don't

understand why we have, so I thought Dewitt and Manlius ...(*inaudible*)...was a subdivision. I couldn't tell the difference until someone said to me as I was closing on a house. You'll know the difference when you pay your tax bill. So now I know that and I live in a County that's a lot bigger, but I would say that my tax dollars are well spent if you maintain the Human Rights Commission; because I can't take the time to tell you now, what made me so interested in this that I asked you to leave to take a job for a few years but that should be some of my personal experiences, dealing with discrimination here in Syracuse.

PRESTON FAGEN – President, NAACP Syracuse/Onondaga

This whole case saying “I made an error; I made a mistake” I think it's obvious after 5 hours the statements have been made. It would appeal to the Human Rights Commission. It is almost crazy to think that you may feel that the Human Rights Commission isn't needed and I think it comes from misinformation a lot of folks think that the Human Rights Commission only are advocates of people of color and people of color in Onondaga County doesn't make up the majority. In dealing with civil rights violations and discrimination on a daily basis these violations come in all colors – male and female, young and old, able and the disabled and I think you are misinformed on human rights discrimination in the work force it is there and it is real. Julius and this department have done a tremendous job. I really take my hat off to the ..(*inaudible*).. on the north side that he was there along with other community leaders to get immigrants to come to this community who felt that they were being discriminated against. They went to the police department and they got nowhere. They were helpless and they were hopeless. Julius, along with other community workers, got to these immigrants and we apologized that they felt that way and we agreed to work with them to get established in this community. So I think what you are doing is a huge error you are going to compound problems and multiply those problems if you do away with the Human Rights Commission. I think you need to go back and say “okay, we made a mistake, we made an error”, and it is OKI to make an error. If you admit that you made a mistake you will gain more respect from your constituents...then to hide and lie about these errors that you have made. These workers came before you, you heard their case and you know what it is real and it is also real that we have a deficit, but I think that if everything came easy, we wouldn't have fun so let's have some fun and try to conquer this where everyone is a winner everyone including the legislators. I don't live in the City of Syracuse, I am actually a Town of Clay resident for over 32 years. However, I spend all of my time in the City, as well as the County. You folks represent the County, which encompasses the whole City as well. The problems in the City is the County and the problems in the County is all of us together. So I do ask the legislators to go back and I know it's late, get some rest and get some sleep and come back tomorrow with a fresh idea to straighten out these problems. Thank you.

PETER SWORDS – Onondaga Diversity Training:

Thank you all for doing what it takes as long as it takes to stay here. As a 20 social work veteran, with 12 years of experience working for the County in child welfare, and now 8 more years in mental health, I want to suggest two simple principles. The first principal is when things in the economy are falling apart, it doesn't really help any of us to scapegoat anybody or blame each other. As we say in County Diversity Training, which by the way, started as a partnership between CSEA and County personnel. We said every group and every issue counts. Now all we need to do is show the numbers. As we continue to lead these workshops, which are called Billing Effective Relations in a Diverse Community, I have had the privilege and pleasure of meeting and training many county workers along with the Human Rights Commission and the County Personnel Department staff who helped me in these hearings. We need the Human Rights Commission as a continuing partner not only in the training of our dedicated and committed County workers, but as an independent agency ensuring that every human rights violation is investigated and stopped. I see this work as essential because we need allies in our own county for people who have serious depression. We don't need scapegoat people who are already depressed and we also don't need to scapegoat the Human Rights Commission. The second principal people in need like people with disabilities, people who are already hurting especially children and youth. It is everybody's responsibility – they are all our children and they can't vote and most of them are haven't spoken here tonight although there were two who were very eloquent. So we can all agree that kids should not be scapegoats either, but I reserve that every time we have an economic downturn what happens the number of reports of respective child neglect goes up. This year for example child protective workers observed and investigated more than one report per worker per day each. The size of the investigators as Bonnie Leff mentioned earlier other CPS service workers have to take on increased responsibilities in protecting kids or families sometimes placing children and I have seen sometimes workers missing lunch or working nights and weekends. I hear their conversations--where the community is concerned

to prevent another fatality like Erin Maxwell or Bonnie Jennings and all of these workers are essential and many of them are raising their own children in their own families so let's not scapegoat any other kids further. So finally, I have worked closely with child welfare workers who have helped families and children to be safe after years of treatment. They have helped save the County millions of dollars and to offset the rise and demand for services. The County Executives' proposal to cut workers' schedules to part-time would actually cost County taxpayers much more...an increase cost of treatment...family health and other criminal justice and other social services. So I encourage the legislature to maintain full schedules; our children... *(inaudible)*.....for the needs of the children in Onondaga County.

DALE BORT

I would like to thank you all it has been a long night and I've waited and waited and waited to get up here. I'm not an eloquent speaker, I'm a man who works on things. I'm an operating engineer. When you look at these buildings you wonder how you stay warm how you stay cold how the facility actually operates it's one of the operating engineers who does it. We take care of Van Duyn; we take care of the Pen; we take care of all of the buildings downtown and all outlying buildings. Our union sat down for negotiations and was handed a paper and said here give back your 3% raise and make concessions to your health care and we were made ...what is the word... "essential." Other workers did it and they were made "essential" by giving up their raise. Our union sat there and said that we would like to go back to our members and talk it over in the 4 day period that was given to them was no employee after that. No more negotiations were given to the operating engineers after that 4th day. We tried to go back to the table to talk to them. No negotiations were given to us. So we had no options. So now I run when there is a leak, I run when there is no heat; I run when there is an odor in the building; I run when somebody gets stuck in an elevator; I run when anybody hears a funny noise. A lot of things go on with people not even knowing about it. You don't know that that building was taken care of all night long when a repair was done while you were sleeping, but all of a sudden I am listed as "non-essential" because I would not give that 3% back. I was not offered the opportunity to go back and negotiate. That hurts. I've been with the County 22 years and I feel that I am "essential" and I do a good job.

ANNE E. BADGER – Taxpayer

I'm going to talk over here because I'm uncomfortable. I know a lot of you, I'm Anne Badger, I am a non-essential retiree, and I retired from Onondaga County after 36 years of service and primarily in the Mental Health Department. The last 10 of those were as Deputy Commissioner. This is a sad day for Onondaga County, I think because when I was Deputy Commissioner I had this poster in my office which showed ten hippos all in the same mud pond cooling off together and I always thought of that because of I have been both on the management confidential side and the civil service CSEA side and I always thought that we are all in this together, and we all need to put our heads together and figure this out. I see over here is the management people, and the way the room is set up it really isn't conducive to us all being together. I'm going to try and be brief, I'm also a taxpayer and live in the Village of Liverpool. I have three grown daughters all of whom followed me into human services and not one of whom makes over \$35,000 a year. Today in the mail was from Mr. Stott, who is my legislator, a very professional package asking me to help re-elect him and one of the key points he made was that we need to keep a lid on property taxes. Now I've lived in Liverpool or a long time, for the last at least 20 years our school taxes go up 6-8% every single year. Our village likes to tell us that there is no tax increase, but every year there is an assessment, which creates a tax increase. I talked to 4 of my neighbors, three of whom are willing to support the somewhere between \$35 and \$55 tax increase that would be required to support this year's County budget to keep services in place. I think that should be considered as a tax increase because one of the things that happen is that we need to go towards a metropolitan government nobody really has the guts to get out there and lead that charge. That charge is going to come because people are over taxed and they are going to resist this dimension. I pay taxes to the County for our library for the Town of Salina and for the Village of Liverpool and school taxes and yes taxes are a burden and they are also a responsibility that we have and it really given my own value system I think that we have a responsibility to take care of people. In 1981, my three daughters needed to go to high school, and we needed to think about college, and there was no way on my salary I could save any money for college. I started a private practice because I was able professionally to do that practice independently in New York State. To this day I have a private psychiatric practice. I work two days a week now. Last year I made \$59,000 after all of my expenses so don't tell me that the private sector is the same as the public sector and I always take a month off and with the County in order to take a month off I had to work 15 years before I got that before I got that vacation. I'm talking about some things that are a little bit different than what other people would talk about. One is that is a very it is being sold as a fair budget but it a mean spirited budget because

the people that are being cut 5 hours a week. Their positions are being changed from permanent to part-time that means that if we ever get out of our slump which I personally believe we will get out of our slump, that everyone is going to have to go through this whole huge process back to the Legislature, which I know takes 5-6 months because I have been there as Deputy doing it--being approved up the ying yang by everybody and everybody is going to stand in the way, and that is one point right there that it would create a huge bureaucracy. We can't just give people less hours in their permanent position so that when we have more money we can use it immediately. Secondly, there is a real difference in civil service between being a permanent employee and being a part-time employee and you guys really ought to make sure that you know what is being asked of the county employees, and I wish there were more here. I also want to talk about this because I do have a children's practice, and I see children who have psychiatric needs. The end of May and the beginning of June I referred 4 children and their families to what is Onondaga County's Children's Crisis Services for Mental Health. Two of those children had just been out of children's hospitals; one had been sent down state and one had been sent to Saratoga because we don't have enough children's psychiatric beds here. For two of them I was trying to prevent from going into psychiatric hospitals and after 2 ½ - 3 months of process. We have so much processing and so many difficulties getting them access to services that families have to do an awful lot of waiting, which is very hard for them. Those people were assigned either on waiting lists, or I think two of them were assigned actually to a worker in what we call the family support program. The Mental Health Department has taken those three people who do the triage and help kids and families access the emergency services and they are all scheduled to be cut five hours. That is two months worth of pay for those employees, and it is a huge reduction because there is already a waiting list for these emergency services. We all know that stress runs downhill and that families are stressed to the max. The kids are the ones who are not understanding, not only teenagers, but little children. They don't understand the stress that but they can feel it from their families, and they are falling apart. The schools are sending them out of the schools. The schools on an elementary level are not able to provide those kinds of services. They are sending them to a few people who actually see kids. Now I want to give you a couple of suggestions as to where the money might be. A friend of mine over here bought me a bottle of water tonight and I can see that Onondaga County has gone into the business of bottling water. Is that really necessary? I bought 2 cases for \$4.25 this morning and it is absolutely as good as this is. Secondly, I know mental health the most and I really looked at the budget and I'm so happy that it is now on the internet and it very helpful in terms of what the heck is going on, but in the mental health budget we are saving \$46,000 local dollars and it is costing \$1,090,000 of local dollars. Do you really want to do that? I also noticed that there are quite a few management confidential positions not just in mental health in other departments that are empty, but they are fully funded in the budget and if you really look at the fringe benefits the %ages are way out of whack. There are an awful lot of people who are still working in their 70's who are still in Tier One. There is a lot of money hidden in this budget at first glance at it. Lastly, I want to say I have been laid off 4 times and never lost my job. I have been under three different (*inaudible*) while I have been with the County and never left my job. I was a pawn those times being moved around and it hurt a lot, but I really have faith in this process and I know you will do the right thing. You always did the right thing when I was involved in it. I know it is a difficult problem, but the care and nurturance of the County employees is what we really have to be doing because those are the people that are the face of Onondaga County to the people that we serve. This is our job, the way we treat them is how they will turn around and treat other people, and I think that this is a mean spirited budget the way it has been presented. I don't blame anybody; I've been in the position of having to cut positions and having to look at some pretty severe budget cuts, but I think we can do better and I thank you for listening to me it's late and everybody is tired, but thank you.

CASSIE KEELER

Ok I'm going to make this fast. I had all of these cards but everyone has already covered that. So y'all have heard how hard this is going to be on employees and health services and stuff. I won't go into that again, and I know it is late and you can just close your eyes as long as you don't go to sleep. I just want to say that I have been a County worker for almost 37 years and I started in 1972 and I have never seen a budget this bad and so insulting to County workers. I do want to say that we all work very hard; I work in Mental Health; I am a social worker. I can tell you on different days of the week who has stayed late and who has come in early and who is working through their lunch hours. We have got a good group of people here and people are feeling pretty undervalued we have secretaries floating around and going "I'm non-essential, I'm non-essential", and they are being asked to do more and more, and I don't know what the difference is between what I do, but I'm an essential, but somehow I'm one of the lucky ones. It makes no sense how they figure it out who is getting their hours cut and who isn't? I also wanted to say that I think the whole thing about the contract and the pay

cuts is like retribution to Joanie Mahoney for us not wanting to reopen our contracts. Documents that supposed to be honored -- normally our contracts are only for 3 years if she has done that she would have had more of a chance really soon to change what we were getting, but she wanted a five-year contract. I think that was so that a contract would come due around election time. You know going into it that you have got to be willing to follow through with what you say. It is not like we are being selfish when we say that we don't want to reopen the contracts, but I've seen what happens in private industry. The unions and the workers say OK, and they make concessions, and six months down the road we make more concessions, and they concede and they concede, and they concede until it until it closes. OK so maybe a 3% raise -- that's not such a big deal, but it is the principal of the thing reopening of the contract now. Let's take this away, let's take that away; it's not fair. It's kind of like the (*inaudible*) rule of contract negotiations. It really frosts me that the rules change all of the time, and it's not fair that the rules change all of the time. I would like to say there are ways of saving money. There was this article in the paper, this simple little article in the paper, that said there was a contract for improving the docks at Onondaga Lake Park marinas so someone was going to pay \$225,000 said that the County was going to pay over half a million dollars and that is \$502,000 to improve the docks at the Onondaga Lake marina. We are talking essential personnel and non-essential. Do you know how much extra the county is going to get in increased revenue? -- \$12,000 -- I kid you not. It was in the newspaper and I'm thinking half a million dollars spent \$12,000 extra? You know it just doesn't make sense that is not a good return on your investment and it is in the newspaper that is something you could cut. Let's put off the dock until next year -- \$500,000 right there. There has got to be other things in the budget right now. Please use common sense and send the budget back; do not approve it. Unfilled, unfilled, unfilled -- those are ways that departments make money -- you get a little cushion here and there -- games that people play with the budget and please don't get fooled by it.

CLOET FRITZ, FOC

I have a fire department uniform on obviously, but I didn't realize that I was going to wear two hats tonight. In a former life, I was a bureau chief in the NYS division of parole. As such, we also had several sex offender units. I listened to the passionate pleas of the people with the probation department here tonight, and I want to tell you a couple of things, and they are not pretty, but you have to hear it. We had a male sexually abuse a 7 month old girl one time. When we quizzed him, he said "she came on to me." We had another situation, and some of you people in the probation department I'm sure refer to NAMBLA or North American Man Boy Love Association. We had some of those people too. That's not very pretty. I can't tell you legislators what to do, nor would I presume so to do, but Public Safety and taking care of our young (*inaudible*). Now having said that, I'll talk about why I am here. I'm here to support Air One. Let me just give you a little background about myself. I had over 4 years of volunteer fire service with Onondaga County. I have responded to more than 16,000 alarms, so I know a little bit about the game. I'm not going to bore you with a whole mess of stories tonight with respect to how we have used Air One, but I was in the fire service when there wasn't Air One in Onondaga County. I just want to give one story about Air One where I was directly responsible. Some of you people must remember the Sorroco fire. It was about a 460,000 square ft. building that burned up. There are other large big box buildings in Onondaga County that you can't cover with the area pieces, and you can't get up in the air high enough with the aerial sequence going on, and you can do your own particular districts and you can't figure out some of these big box buildings. On June 12, 1990 one of the ten worst fires in America that year occurred at the Sorroco plant on Route 48 in the Baldwinsville Fire District. At that time, I was chief of the Moyer's Corners Fire Department and responded to it with the Onondaga County mutual aid plan. Upon arrival I was assigned by the incident commander to Air One, where I spent the next four hours. While in the air and using the (*inaudible*)... that is a radar device that picks up heat, I could watch the progress of that fire where it was burning on the warehouse roof... coming to the rear of the building, to the front of the building, and there were people on the roof. We got people off the roof. About 3 minutes later it collapsed--lives lost. After the roof collapsed, there is no doubt in my mind that Air One could have saved those lives. I don't know how to square the circle that you gentlemen have to wrestle with. I don't know how you square the circle with human lives and economic financial decisions. That is something you have to wrestle with. I do, however, know that after a tragedy and lives are lost there is much second guessing, finger pointing, and they will never be forgotten. I have been through enough of those and probably you have too. When the merry-go-round stops, the funeral is over, and the people go home to the husband, wife, son or daughter or whatever the case may be, and the real grieving starts. The families will never be the same. Remember this is primarily volunteer fire service in this County no matter how you slice it. And probably there is reduced income because of the death in the family, etc. I implore you ...please don't take this valuable resource from us. For career or volunteer fire

service in Onondaga County, it does a hell of a lot more than transport people to hospitals. We use the fire service for many things and that camera sure saved two lives that night. Thank you so much.

DICK BEACH – N. SYRACUSE FIRE DEPT.

Thank you very much it has been a long night and I will try to keep it short. My name is Dick Beach and I have 60+ years of volunteer fire service. I am very very proud of the fact that I served about 20 of those years as the assistant fire coordinator in this County. I would like to tell you what I'm here about. I'm about Air One and I think that very honestly it is a tool for fire service. We have some of the best fire departments in the world protecting the people of Onondaga County. Everyone of those people do the best they can to get tools to do certain jobs that fall ... God knows how and when. One of those tools turns out to be Air One. Fire departments put all of their tools in boxes. Every fire department in this County including the City of Syracuse has a toolbox with all special tools. Inside of that toolbox is Air One. It is a special tool. It will do things for us, keep us safe, allow us to work to do a better job, protect the guys who are in it and between search and rescue they participate in over one (*inaudible*) ...and the pick ups on the road. Anyone of us in this room could walk out that door, get into our car to go home, and on the way home get into a bad accident and possibly have to have an emergency transport. In the toolbox all fire departments have is Air One. I'm here to tell you something ...we need to keep that tool because it is the only thing that is going. The story is we need Air One; save Air One. The fire service needed for the (*inaudible*) ... button to have deliver water and saves countless hours. The bulk of the fire service in this County is volunteer. You are away from home and away from work... anything that can help. It also works in search and rescue -- over 8 counties and the whole 9 yards. It is an important tool, and I have looked in all of those toolboxes in the various fire departments and Air One is not in there. We appreciate the Sheriff's Department getting a vehicle like that to make our job as (*inaudible*) as it is.

SUSAN MACK – SPECIAL CHILDREN'S HEALTH

As an ex-school teacher I really want to get you up and doing some jumping jacks. I appreciate your patience and your listening to all of us. I'm really representing everybody. My name and what I do in the County isn't particularly relevant. I am speaking for myself, my thoughts, and for county personnel who are here. I have solutions to the budget woes. What I am asking you is that you do some just thinking, some fair thinking. Is it really just that we signed a contract six months ago and now we are being asked to renegotiate that very same contract? I'm not a lawyer, but I have listened to Judge Judy (*inaudible*).... Is it really just that we all started in the County on step A and worked our way up, and she came in, Nick Pirro left and he was here for years and years and years. I suggest that she start at step A and the same thing with Mr. Fisher. I hope that you are listening to me, Mr. Fisher, because I'm going to be talking about you later. They say that there is this hiring freeze, but then you create new positions in the same vein...I don't get that. Not that right for this person or that person -- and it's is all in the notes here. I feel that it is just political posturing that there is really no intent to have us cut to 2% that doesn't make any sense it is so that the finger will be pointed at somebody else. Is it really just or even logical with so many people being laid off in the private sector that you are coming to people that would provide those people the support services. That doesn't seem logical to me. As for sacrifice and stepping to the plate, Mr. Fisher you make over \$150,000 a year. No? I thought that is what I read in the budget. Am I wrong? OK If I made your salary not only would I not take the 2% increase in pay, I would give the 2% back to the County. So I am just asking you, that in your thinking, you take these points into consideration as you reject this budget.

AL CRUMP

I will have worked for Onondaga County for thirty years come next month, and I tried to look back to remember exactly when I got involved with the Union and the earliest date I can remember was '88. So I guess that kind of puts me as a seasoned person that has negotiated a lot of contracts.

In my process of thinking this, and I thought, man have I gotten old looking at the years I've spent. But I mention this, and I've had the opportunity to work in three departments in the county. I mention my service in the union because I have sat through many negotiations for numerous contracts in this county.. and, yes.. I have brought the \$700 of 1.5% and the 2%, and even the occasional 3% that we have gotten in this county, and yet we have seen record breaking surpluses in county budgets and not once have I ever heard anybody in this county come back to us or its members and say "you know what, we have a little extra money to give you," how about we reopen your contract and we'll give you a little bit more. Not once have I ever seen that happen in the many years that I've been involved in. I went to the Ways and Means Committee the other day and there were some comments made about people, not everybody willing to incur the pain of this budget. Well, I

have news for you, in the 22 years I have served in this union, county employees have incurred the pain of these budgets. I just wanted to mention though, that out of the 51 cuts that are proposed, 45 of these are county employees, CSEA positions, and I would ask you to look at what positions are being cut and why. Out of those 45, 29 of those positions that are being cut are people that I represent. I've talked to those people - I haven't gotten to all of them, but I've talked to a lot of them. I've talked to people in the Student's Assistance Program, and we have been here a number of times trying to show you how viable this program is. I don't think we have to do that, you know. But yet, we're here again. One of the things that I've learned working in different departments - I worked in WEP for a period of time -- in fact in '93 -- that's when I worked there. One of the things that I found interesting was that the fact that the layoffs in '93 was the overruns in the OnCenter, and here we are in the same building that we are talking about layoffs again. I mention this because when the layoffs happened, and I said what I thought about how this was all going to work out, when these furloughs happen and back in 93 we had a bunch of people in the highway department that were laid off MEO's and they came in to WEP. They bumped out less senior people in WEP who had no clue how to drive a tanker, where the plants were. They all had to be trained. Lots of people - it was a small group but it was in turmoil for a period of time as the processes happen. But think about this on a 2100 people scale of the bumping rights you are going to have massive people moving from department to department, not departments, but divisions to divisions who may not know the rules and regulations of those divisions. You are going to have to shut down county government if this happens. You know, I've heard, one of the other places that I've worked is at the college, and I've had the opportunity while I was there to go through negotiations. One of the things that I've learned about negotiations is compromise, and I have heard many times how this union does not want to come to the table and talk about the issues. We've been there and we give you viable solutions and all we get back is "Its not enough". Well, I'll give you the lesson 101 in negotiations. Nobody walks from the table with what they want. It's what you can live with; and each time we have sat down and tried to work issues out with this county they come back and say it's not enough. This is where they are and it's not enough to move up their positions to where they have been. We have offered other ideas - the Canada RX - a lot of savings in the prescription plan. The health insurance for retirees - there's millions of dollars there in savings, but when we got to the point where we were it wasn't enough; and that's where it ended right there. We had suggested early retirement incentives. Offer a real early retirement incentive. Offer something not where people can retire and come back and work for the county part-time. Offer something and eliminate the jobs through attrition and not laying off the people. Another class I took up at the college was a class where the professor had on his final quiz was a question on there..."What was the name of the person and what do they do that you walk by every morning?" -- it counted for 25% of the test. The whole purpose of that was, that person had been referred to, if you hadn't figured it out, was a custodian worker that worked there, and he wanted to know if you knew that person's name because he had enough time to stop and talk to that person. Every position in this county, whether you thinks it's essential or not, has a value and has a purpose - and each person here is important to the services of the county, so I will close with that.

JASON HAGERMAN

I'm here to talk about the Student Assistance Program. I am Jason Hagerman. I'm a resident of Baldwinsville and a 2009 graduate of C.W. Baker High School -- one of the schools losing its student assistance-counseling program. I am here today once again before the legislature a little disappointed. I was in the same place just a different room last time--do not cut the Student Assistance Program. I understand that other events have already occurred, but I will just read what I have and maybe the more you hear them the more you will listen... maybe not or you will slouch down half asleep, but that's OK. The first point I want to make is that I am no longer in the program... (*inaudible*)...I cannot imagine my high school years without my student assistance counselor, and I do not want to do it again but I will. Last time the issue was not cutting the program it was contracted out to another agency. This time I'm here to tell you that it is a very necessary program. The budget cuts... some which I can understand are necessary. The Student Assistance Program is a program that the County just doesn't want to deal. I would like to point out the current commissioner, Robert Long, who is the first commissioner in 25 years that has (*inaudible*) to make a decision about mental health programs in the County. The legislature has been told, as I understand it, that the Student Assistance Program is not being utilized. I could not disagree more. The program in Baldwinsville, where I was since 1985, and the current counselor has a full schedule. Mr. Long does not know anything about it. As I understand it, Baldwinsville and CNS have the highest utilization rates per counselor in the County. (*inaudible*...). It seems very convenient, however, that the same employee number, eight, are the people being laid off during this time. Maybe I am wrong, maybe Mr. Long has decided that this is a good place to cut (*inaudible*). According to generous estimates given by the County the budget will save approximately \$8,000 for eight laid off employees seems like ten is in the County budget to me. At such a low number because the County only pays less than 10% of

the cost. The local school districts and the State makes up the rest. If the program isn't being utilized, then why is it still in the school district budgets. I know that my school would not pay for something that they are not using. Even if the commissioner did remember how to punch the numbers in the calculator... (inaudible)... and other budget costs, because the school districts do not take care of that. It just makes no sense and ethically it makes no sense as well. Why would anyone cut such a number in the school community in the middle of the school year. (inaudible)... are established with students, and it is just simply cruel. I have one less point to make. A counselor in this program is different than anyone in the school and cannot be replaced. These are county employees who are able to have a confidentiality, that the guidance counselors cannot even dream of -- did not have us I would have never opened up to her. Also, these counselors provide as faculty advisors for many activities such as (inaudible) at Baker which is a group much like they have at CNS that promotes general (inaudible)...of people and students (inaudible)...constructive decisions. This will be a void in all County schools. I ask the County Legislature to keep this vital program. Thank you.

TANIA SPEIGHT:

I couldn't understand the mentality that (inaudible) to design in your forum. The persons who really need to address this issue but you are sitting over here...way over here; and the persons talking to the audience who can't do one thing about the issues that you guys are creating. My name is Tania Speight and I'm concerned about two programs. You heard the young man talking about the Student Assistance Program. Help me understand. I don't think the situation's clear. I think they cut budgets when they don't have the money. The one thing that we did was every cut that we thought about cutting, we had a plan. We looked at the impact and the cause of the impact that the elimination of this program would have on families, children, and the economy. I don't think you guys did that. I think you guys are (inaudible) and you looked at the dollar amount, and you knew how much money it saved, so you began to count dollars, not service and its impact on families and children. The Student Assistance Program, now I'm going to tell you (inaudible) when you ran for office and you won. The economy has indicated, and you all know how families have lost jobs, lost homes, and they've lost their life style. That in itself has an impact on children and families. So, these (inaudible)... that they don't know why and how they got there or if their mom or their dad's or if their aunts or uncles are going to feel better and become the person that they should be. Then this group comes along, knowing what is happening with families and children and you cut the program. (inaudible).....When you cut, you need to look at the costs of the elimination of the programs. My second program is Human Rights. I don't get this. I do not get this. You guys look old enough to have been around in Syracuse when both organizations were alive and doing well. This is too (inaudible) overnight and you guys say reduce your service? For someone that can't read, I'm having a mental dysfunction, I'm kidding, I'm kidding! This program - look at the cost of this program when you cut it. You will be sued up the ying yang more than \$300,000 maybe \$300,000,000 because of our work a person who had really been discriminated seriously, you pay for it. You need to think about the decisions you are making and you need to use some of that common sense you used when you ran for office. You were (inaudible). You thought about every little twist that you could to get people to vote for you. Use some of those same skills when you look at this budget and for once provide for others.

MARGARET COLEMAN - AGING

My name is Margaret Coleman and I'm with the Onondaga County Department of Aging and I want to thank you very much for the referrals you've made to me. I'm the Agent Service Specialist and when you call me, you call because you look at us, Onondaga County Department of Aging and Youth, as the experts in what we do in working with senior adults and working with youth. I appreciate any referrals and I appreciate being able to help the seniors in our community. These seniors are not big faces. They are your parents, they are your neighbors, they are your friends, and your grandparents. They are your constituents and they need help, and you look at us as the experts and you look at us as needing us to help you help them. How can you say they are non-essential? Thank you.

There being no further speakers, Chairman Rhinehart closed the hearing at 1:25 a.m., October 9, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,



JOHANNA ROBB,
Deputy Clerk



DEBORAH L. MATURO,
Clerk