



Press Release

Monroe County Democratic Caucus

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For Immediate Release

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Democrats Warn Public of Plan To Change County Budget Process

Republican measure would weaken voter recourse at the ballot box

Rochester, New York – August 10, 2006: Democrats are calling foul on a Republican-sponsored proposal to delay submission of the Monroe County budget until after Election Day, and they are urging public input on the anti-voter measure.

The proposal, which would shift the budget submission deadline from the second Tuesday in October to November 15, would cut in half the amount of time that Monroe County legislators and citizens would have to review the 1,000 page, billion-dollar budget.

"This legislation is unacceptable. The proposed deadline does not provide nearly enough time for legislators to address the budget in a thorough and responsible manner, and it severely limits time for public review and debate," stated Minority Leader Carla Palumbo, "Almost 90% of New York State counties that have elected county executives - - like Monroe - - require budgets to be submitted to the legislative body before Election Day."

In 1977, a budget was submitted after an election in Monroe County and it contained a Republican-sponsored 47% tax increase, prompting action by county legislators to move the deadline to the current cut-off date.

"This proposal can be likened to a "get out of jail free" card. The public shall not be fooled, it is politically motivated plan. It lets elected officials off the hook," said Assistant Democratic Leader Harry Bronson, "The budget is a statement of the County's priorities and voters should have the opportunity to use that statement when judging county officials during election time. Having a budget deadline *before* Election Day preserves government accountability. It requires the County Executive and legislators to be upfront with voters about the state of Monroe County's finances and it allows adequate time for legislators, the public, and agencies that receive county funding to review and debate the extremely voluminous document."

A similar piece of legislation was put forth by Republicans in 2004, but was dropped after drawing much public criticism.

A public hearing on the proposal has been set for September 12, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. in the Monroe County Legislative Chambers located at 39 West Main Street, 4th Floor. Citizens are encouraged to speak at the hearing and may call the Clerk of the Legislature at 753-1950 to sign up to speak.

A copy of the proposal is attached.

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