



Monroe County Legislature

CALVIN LEE, JR.
ASSISTANT DEMOCRATIC LEADER

CALVIN LEE, JR.
LEGISLATOR - DISTRICT 25
19 SHELTER STREET
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611
OFFICE (585) 753-1940
HOME (585) 328-5222

January 17, 2008

Honorable Wayne E. Zyra, President
Monroe County Legislature
Room 410 County Office Building
39 West Main Street
Rochester, New York 14614

Dear President Zyra:

In accordance with Section 545-24(A), I ask that my proposed referral entitled "Re-establishing a Non-Political, Merit-Based Process for Selection of the Public Defender" be considered of sufficient concern as to warrant its acceptance as a Matter of Importance for the current legislative cycle.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Calvin Lee, Jr.
Assistant Democratic Leader

cc: David M. Barry, Jr., Clerk, Monroe County Legislature





Monroe County Legislature

CALVIN LEE, JR.
ASSISTANT DEMOCRATIC LEADER

CALVIN LEE, JR.
LEGISLATOR - DISTRICT 25
19 SHELTER STREET
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611
OFFICE (585) 753-1940
HOME (585) 328-5222

January 17, 2008

To the Honorable
Monroe County Legislature
407 County Office Building
39 West Main Street
Rochester, NY 14614

Re: Re-establishing a Non-Political, Merit-Based Process for Selection of the Public Defender

Honorable Legislators:

The Office of the Public Defender is responsible for representing and advocating for individuals who cannot afford a private attorney. In 1977, the Monroe County Bar Association established a non-political, merit-based screening panel, composed of legal professionals and community representatives, to review all applicants for the position of public defender and make its recommendation to the Public Safety Committee of the County Legislature. This process was transparent and inclusive, ensuring that the legal community contributed its expertise and that the diversity of clients served by the public defender was adequately represented.


Over the past few months, citizens of Monroe County have come forward to demand a fair and non-partisan method for selecting a new public defender. The Monroe County Bar Association, along with the Coalition for a Fair and Independent Monroe County Public Defender's Selection Process, both withdrew their support from a legislatively-organized screening panel. The recent decision to make the Legislature's Public Safety Committee responsible for reviewing applicants has shut the community entirely out of the process.


Therefore, in order to restore the community's confidence in the selection process and to ensure a thorough and professional evaluation of applicants for the position of public defender, we propose that this Honorable Body adopt a resolution to allow the Monroe County Bar Association to form and administer an ad-hoc screening panel committee, to function outside of the Monroe County Legislature to review applicants and submit its recommendation of the top three (3) qualified candidates to the Public Safety Committee of the Legislature, and to extend the deadline for applications thirty (30) days for the purpose of conducting a nationwide search for candidates .




This referral shall have no financial impact on the 2008 Monroe County Budget.


Respectfully submitted,



Harry B. Bronson
Democratic Minority Leader


Calvin Lee, Jr.
Assistant Minority Leader

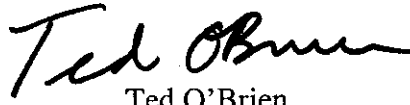

Carrie M. Andrews
Assistant Minority Leader



Richard A. Beebe
Legislator – District 6

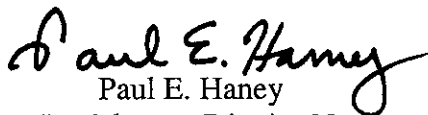

Carmen Gumina
Legislator – District 8



Travis R. Heider
Legislator – District 14

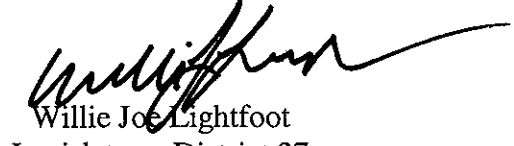

Vincent Esposito
Legislator – District 16


Ted O'Brien
Legislator – District 17



Glenn J. Gamble
Legislator – District 22


Paul E. Haney
Legislator – District 23


Steve Eckel
Legislator – District 26


Willie Joe Lightfoot
Legislator – District 27


Cynthia W. Kaleh
Legislator – District 28


José A. Cruz
Legislator – District 29