



# *Monroe County Legislature*

**TRAVIS R. HEIDER**  
LEGISLATOR - DISTRICT 14

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January 7, 2008

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

**Re: Broadcasting Full Legislature Meetings and any Special Hearings or Sessions**

Honorable Legislators:

In her acceptance speech after being sworn into her second term, County Executive Brooks pledged to "continue to lead in the spirit of bi-partisanship and openness that taxpayers should expect from their government." Democracy relies on the participation of citizens. It is every elected official's responsibility to encourage and facilitate public involvement in government by conducting public business in an open manner, to provide citizens with better insight into the decision-making process and to maintain the public's trust.

In 2005, the New York State Senate and Assembly both agreed to broadcast legislative sessions, starting in January of 2006. New York joins twenty-one other states that already have televised coverage. On a more local level many towns in Monroe County utilize public access cable television to broadcast live and taped editions of town council meetings; including the towns of Brighton, Webster, Irondequoit, Fairport, and Penfield.

All citizens of Monroe County should have the opportunity to witness the important policy debates and decisions occurring in the Monroe County Legislature. New technology has made broadcasting government meetings much more feasible. It is time for this Honorable Body to broadcast its meetings to the public.

Presently, the County's official web site ([www.monroecounty.gov](http://www.monroecounty.gov)) contains a series of videos of the County Executive welcoming internet users. Clearly, the County has already taken advantage of technology that enables video posting. By posting videos of legislature proceedings on the legislature page of the Monroe County web site, a landmark achievement in openness of government will be attained.

Therefore, we propose that this Honorable Body amend the Rules of the Monroe County Legislature to require that as of September 9, 2008 all Full Legislature meetings and any special legislative sessions or hearings must be broadcasted to the public.

**The specific legislative action required is:**

**Insert new rule, Article II, Meetings of the Legislature, Section 545-11 Broadcasting Sessions of the Legislature**

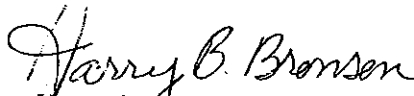
A. All sessions of the Monroe County Legislature, including but not limited to the organizational meeting, regular meetings, public hearings, as well as any impromptu special meetings or public hearings shall be video and/or digitally recorded. Copies of the recording shall be filed with the Clerk of the Legislature. Video and/or digital recordings shall be posted on the County's website, and distributed to appropriate public access venues in Monroe County.

Costs associated with this proposal should not exceed \$5,000 and are to be absorbed by the County's contingency account.

Respectfully submitted,



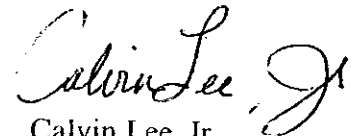
Travis R. Heider  
Legislator - District 14



Harry B. Bronson  
Democratic Minority Leader



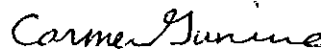
Carrie M. Andrews  
Assistant Minority Leader



Calvin Lee, Jr.  
Assistant Minority Leader



Richard A. Beebe  
Legislator - District 6



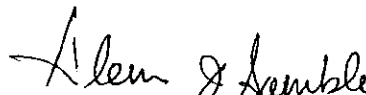
Carmen Gumina  
Legislator - District 8



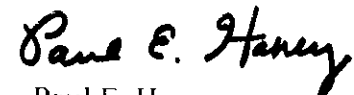
Vincent Esposito  
Legislator - District 16



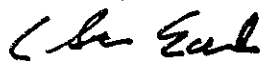
Ted O'Brien  
Legislator - District 17



Glenn J. Gamble  
Legislator - District 22



Paul E. Haney  
Legislator - District 23



Steve Eckel  
Legislator - District 26



José A. Cruz  
Legislator - District 29



Willie Joe Lightfoot  
Legislator - District 27