



Monroe County Legislature

TRAVIS R. HEIDER
LEGISLATOR - DISTRICT 14

TRAVIS R. HEIDER
LEGISLATOR - DISTRICT 24
9 HOLLOWAY ROAD
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14610
RES. (585) 218-0682
FAX. (585) 428-3406
E-MAIL: travis@travisheider.com

January 6, 2006

OFFICIAL FILE COPY
No. <u>060006</u>
Not to be removed from the Office of the Legislature Of Monroe County
Committee Assignment
<u>AGENDA/CHARTER_L</u>

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

Re: **Requesting the Legislature to Immediately Conduct a Study of All Existing Options for Broadcasting Full Legislature Meetings, Standing Committee Meetings and any Special Hearings.**

Honorable Legislators:

With the start of the New Year, ten brand new members to the County Legislature, and several others that started within the last year, there is a tremendous opportunity to start anew and be persistent about reforming the public image of government by continuing to open government and bring it closer to the people.

In 1979, C-SPAN began cablecasting the U.S. House of Representatives live to 3.5 million households. C-SPAN has had an enormous impact on the way citizens are able to access government and their representatives. Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike recently acknowledged that C-SPAN is one of only three news organizations to make the list of "most trusted sources." Frequent viewers of C-SPAN were most educated about current events. Furthermore, there appears to be a positive correlation between enhanced education and more interest in government.

In 2005, the N.Y. State Senate and Assembly agreed to broadcast legislative sessions in each chamber, starting in January of 2006. Additionally, deliberations, joint budget hearings, conference committee meetings and leaders meetings will be covered on a cable channel seven days a week. New York joins twenty-one other states that already have televised coverage.

Many towns in Monroe County utilize cable access to broadcast live and taped editions of town council meetings. Brighton regularly broadcasts town as well as school board meetings. Town of Webster regularly broadcasts school, village, and town council meetings. Fairport

Area Community Television hosts various municipal events including village and school board meetings.

C-SPAN brought government closer to the people and that path has been followed now by New York State and numerous towns and villages. It is time that citizens of Monroe County be engaged and informed about the important policy debates and decisions that will affect their lives. Any opportunity for a more open responsive government should be seized. Technology and access had made the feasibility of such a project much more realistic than a decade ago. In a time of mounting public skepticism about the role of public officials, it is more important than ever to open the process to the people.

Therefore, we recommend that this Honorable Body require the Monroe County Legislature to immediately conduct a study of all existing options for broadcasting Full Legislature Meetings, standing committee meetings and any special hearings. We request that the members of the Legislature receive the completed study within three legislative cycles. This proposal shall have no impact on the revenues or expenditures of the 2006 Monroe County budget.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carla M. Palumbo
Democratic Leader

Travis R. Heider
Legislator - District 14

Harry B. Bronson
Assistant Democratic Leader

Carrie M. Andrews
Legislator - District 21

Paul E. Haney
Legislator - District 24

C. Steven Eckel
Legislator - District 26

Willie Joe Lightfoot
Legislator - District 27

Jose A. Cruz
Legislator - District 29