



ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

HON. LINDSAY R. LORIGO

10TH DISTRICT LEGISLATOR

March 17, 2025

Shawn Connolly
Chair, Erie County Charter Revision Commission
92 Franklin St.
Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear Members of the Erie County Charter Review Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you a few weeks ago. I appreciate the time and effort you are dedicating to this important process, and I wanted to formally reiterate some of the issues we discussed.

First and foremost, I strongly urge the Commission to maintain the current process requiring a supermajority vote or a ballot referendum to extend the temporary sales tax. Any change to this process would be a dangerous shift that effectively removes the voices of the majority of towns in Erie County from the table. For years, Erie County has operated under this system without issue. There is no need to create a problem where none exists. This exact proposal was overwhelmingly rejected by the electorate in November, and proceeding with a change that was so overwhelmingly rejected could erode public trust in this Commission.

Our goal should be to ensure that elected officials come together to fight for what is best for our entire community. Requiring a supermajority has consistently led to the best outcomes for all Erie County residents. Regardless of which party holds the majority, this is important to maintain according to the voters. On issues as important as tax policy, we should continue to demand broad consensus—through either a supermajority vote or a public referendum—before making decisions that directly impact county taxpayers.

Secondly, I would like to address the request from the County Executive's Office to increase the amount of money that can be shifted without legislative oversight. While the current \$10,000 threshold may seem low, significantly increasing this limit would be ripe for abuse. The Erie County Legislature serves as a check and balance on the County Executive. Granting a single elected official the ability to move substantial sums of money without legislative oversight is dangerous and leaves the county exposed to possible fraud and corruption.

Lastly, I want to bring attention to a recent concerning action by the County Executive—the declaration of an unforeseen public holiday that was not due to weather or any county-related emergency. I fully agree with the Erie County Clerk that this is an issue that should be addressed in the Charter to prevent future occurrences. While the County Executive retains the power to close the county in the event of an emergency, unilaterally declaring a public holiday at will is an overreach. This particular decision cost taxpayers upwards of \$1 million, disrupted numerous county programs, and set a dangerous precedent that now requires correction. I strongly encourage the Commission to limit the County Executive's ability to declare public holidays without proper justification and oversight.

Again, I appreciate the work that you are doing on behalf of our community, and I cannot emphasize enough the significance of the decisions you are making. If any members of the Commission have questions or would like to discuss these issues further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Lindsay Lorigo
Erie County Legislator – District 10