



County of Erie Charter Revision Commission

92 Franklin St., 4th Fl., Buffalo, NY 14202

May 15, 2025

Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street, 4th Floor
Buffalo, NY 14202

RE: Erie County Charter Revision Commission

Dear Honorable Members:

As Chair of the Erie County Charter Revision Commission, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to serve and engage with our community on proposed modifications, amendments, and recommendations to the Erie County Charter.

From the outset, our Commission approached this responsibility with seriousness and dedication. We met frequently, conducted robust discussions, and most importantly, listened, both to one another and to the members of the public who participated in our hearings. Beginning on December 27, 2024, and concluding on May 5, 2025, the Commission held a total of eight public hearings across the County. These hearings were well-attended and included input from residents as well as elected officials at the County, Town, City, and Village levels.

Following extensive review and deliberation, the Commission considered a total of sixty-two recommendations. Each proposal was first vetted in subcommittee and if a recommendation was brought before the full Commission, there was a vote. 33 recommendations were submitted, and 27 recommendations were approved to be provided to the legislature for potential amendment to the current Charter.

Among the most frequently discussed and passionately voiced topics were matters related to elections and ballot access. The public expressed strong interest in adopting Ranked Choice Voting, reducing the number of signatures required for Independent Nominating Petitions, and implementing term limits for County-wide elected officials. Additionally, the creation of a formal nepotism policy for County Employees was widely supported. We ultimately chose that our commission wasn't the correct forum for us to make formal recommendations on these topics, but feel they are noteworthy for your consideration.

Another prevailing concern was presenting any recommendation that was recently rejected by public referendum. Specifically, community members voiced firm opposition to revisiting the November 2024 sales tax proposition, which was defeated at the ballot box. The consensus was clear: proposals that have been explicitly rejected by voters should not be reintroduced through Charter amendment within such a short timeframe.

This letter cannot capture every idea or concern raised during our proceedings. However, the full scope of our work and all formal recommendations are available on the Commission's website for public review.

On behalf of the entire Commission, I extend our collective appreciation for the opportunity to serve Erie County in this capacity. It has been an honor to participate in this important civic process. Should you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Shawn Connolly
Chair of Erie County Charter Revision Commission



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92 Franklin St., 4th Fl., Buffalo, NY 14202

State Senator Patrick M. Gallivan
2721 Transit Rd. Suite 116
Elma, NY 14059

State Senator April N. McCants-Baskin
37 Franklin St. Suite 550
Buffalo, NY 14202

Assemblymember William C. Conrad III
34 Peuquet Pkwy.
Tonawanda, NY 14150

Assemblymember Patrick B. Burke
3686 Seneca St.
West Seneca, NY 14224

Assemblymember Paul A. Bologna
8180 Main St.
Clarence, NY 14221

Assemblymember Karen M. McMahon
5500 Main St. Suite 224
Williamsville, NY 14221

Assemblymember Jonathan D. Rivera
65 Grant St.
Buffalo, NY 14213

State Senator Sean M. Ryan
40 La Riviere Dr. Suite 121
Buffalo, NY 14202

Assemblymember Stephen M. Hawley
121 N. Main St. Suite 100
Albion, NY 14411

Assemblymember Crystal D. Peoples
425 Michigan Ave. Suite 107
Buffalo, NY 14203

Assemblymember Patrick J. Chludzinski
2562 Walden Ave. Suite 102
Cheektowaga, NY 14225

Assemblymember Angelo J. Morinello
800 Main St. Suite 2C
Niagara Falls, NY 14301

Assemblymember David J. DiPietro
411 Main St.
East Aurora, NY 14052

Assemblymember Andrew M. Molitor
2 E. 2nd St. Fenton Building / Suite 320
Jamestown, NY 14701