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Onondaga County Legislature
**REPUBLICAN
CAUCUS**

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County Legislature Votes Down Costly Commission

Onondaga County Republican Legislators are committed to strengthening the County's existing Independent Reapportionment Commission. Legislators voted against Local Law C because it is too complicated, too bureaucratic, too expensive and is an example of 'Taxation without Representation'.

The Republican Caucus made a pledge to strengthen the non-partisan nature of redistricting. **Contrary to media reports, Legislators did not pledge to support Local Law C.**

The Fair Maps Pledge stated: "I pledge my support for non-partisan and independent redistricting in the County of Onondaga. If elected, I will work to ensure fair and representative County Legislature districts."

We have heard the concerns and agree that there is room for improvement. We will propose legislation that will:

- **Recommend the Floor Leaders and the County Executive appoint individuals that are not registered in a major party**
- **Ban former or current elected officials and party committee members from serving on the Reapportionment Commission**
- **Prohibit incumbency from being considered in the formation of any legislative district**
- **Encourage public proposals for the commission to review from citizens and/or civic groups**
- **Improve public participation and input by increasing to at least five public hearings during the Reapportionment Commission's process at various times and locations across the County**
- **Accept applications from Onondaga County citizens that would like to be appointed to the Reapportionment Commission**
- **Recommend that the Chair of the Reapportionment Commission be one of the appointees from the County Executive or Floor Leaders**

Onondaga County Legislature Republican Caucus

District 1: Brian F. May
District 2: James J. Rowley
District 3: Tim Burtis
District 4: Judy Tassone

District 5: Debra J. Cody
District 6: Julie Abbott-Kenan
District 10: Kevin Holmquist

District 11: John D. McBride
District 12: David H. Knapp
District 13: Ken Bush, Jr.
District 14: Casey E. Jordan

These actions ensure that the membership of the commission is non-partisan and enhances public access to the process. The Republican Caucus will introduce these changes without having to create a complicated, costly, untested concept that is potentially unconstitutional.

Experience has shown that the type of independent redistricting commission being proposed is not a widely-accepted concept and has cost the two other communities that completed a similar process close to \$1 million. Local Law C has no cap on its cost. In a year where we are losing revenues, putting austerity budgets in place, considering tax increases, large uses of reserves and layoffs, it seems entirely irresponsible to consider drastic changes to a process that has demonstrated it works. The Onondaga County Reapportionment Commission, established in the Charter years ago, has proven itself to work outside party lines and is not influenced by the majority party. The proof of this is that current enrollment in eleven out of the seventeen districts lean Democrat.

The members of the Republican caucus stand by their pledge to make redistricting less political. **Local Law C was never part of that promise and falls short of that goal. Voters lose their voice under Legislator Ryan's proposal. Citizen recourse is completely removed without the option of permissive referendum.** Additionally, this legislation prohibits the County Executive from vetoing the proposed commission's findings which is another loss to the checks and balances that are in our current system.

Chairman Dave Knapp added, "We already have an independent commission. We are committed to improving our non-partisan commission with many more opportunities for public participation. Contrary to what we are hearing from our colleagues across the aisle, at this difficult economic time, we should work within the existing structure. The supporters of Local Law C have proposed a plan with an open check book to spending that we cannot afford. This complex and costly law is being proposed at a time when we are desperately trying to keep employees on the job and the County fiscally solvent."

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