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ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

HON. EDWARD A. RATH, III
LEGISLATOR

October 19, 2012

Hon. Betty Jean Grant
Chairperson of the Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street – Fourth Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

RE: Budget Hearing Schedule

Dear ~~Chairperson~~ BETTY JEAN Grant:

As I review the proposed 2013 budget that was submitted to the legislature by the County Executive, I am troubled by the rising cost of fringe benefits. On page 8 of the County Executive's unsigned letter to the legislature describing the specifics of the budget, he mentions that rising health care and pension costs have escalated the fringe benefit cost to 67% of a county employee's salary.

In last year's budget, the four year plan called for a fringe benefit expense of $112.6 million in 2013. Last year, then County Comptroller Poloncarz stated that he believed the prior administration had inflated fringe benefit costs. This year, the fringe benefit cost for 2013 has risen to $126.8 million, an increase of over $14 million. At the same time that we are asked to consider a 3.4% property tax hike on the residents we are elected to serve, I think we have a duty to ask questions about that increase.

I am writing to formally request that additional budget hearing testimony be added to this year's calendar so we can hear from representatives from the State Comptroller's Office, Erie County's Department of Personnel, Labor Healthcare Management Fund, and our Erie County Comptroller.

It is my hope that these representatives can clarify for all of us what the real costs are and how they are determined. Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

EDWARD A. RATH, III
Erie County Legislator
District 6

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