



ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

HON. JOSEPH C. LORIGO
10TH DISTRICT LEGISLATOR
MINORITY LEADER

April 16, 2018

Mark C. Poloncarz
Erie County Executive
95 Franklin Street – 16th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

Dear Executive Poloncarz,

I write to you today to respectfully request that you temporarily withdraw Marie Cannon's name from consideration for the appointment of Commissioner of Social Services.

As you are aware, the Legislature is currently awaiting results of an RFP for an independent investigator to review situation surrounding Al Dirschberger's resignation and the allegations surrounding his departure. While there is no direct complaint against Ms. Cannon, the investigation will be looking into allegations that one or more Deputy Commissioners were aware of prior complaints against Mr. Dirschberger. Any confirmation vote on a new Commissioner should be held until all the facts have been ascertained, especially as Ms. Cannon was employed as a department management for the duration of Mr. Dirschberger's tenure.

Ms. Cannon may be highly qualified, have properly reported any complaints, or not even been privy to any information about the Mr. Dirschberger's behavior. However, the Legislature unanimously approved the need for an independent investigation into the Department of Social Services. I believe that the independent investigation should be complete prior to the confirmation of any new Commissioner, especially one who worked as second in command during Mr. Dirschberger's tenure.

In the past, you have asked me to come to you with any concerns about your appointments prior to taking them "public." That is exactly what I am doing with this letter. I recognize Ms. Cannon's qualifications, history of service with Erie County, and record with employees and legislators. This letter is not intended to impute any negative views or opinions about Ms. Cannon. However, as you have previously noted, it is not easy to remove a Social Services



ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

HON. JOSEPH C. LORIGO
10TH DISTRICT LEGISLATOR
MINORITY LEADER

Commissioner due to their employment contract and term. As such, I believe the independent investigation should conclude prior to any confirmation vote.

I know Ms. Cannon currently sits as interim Commissioner. I have no issue with her remaining active in that role while the independent investigation occurs. If any Legislative action is necessary to continue her in that role, I would gladly support it. However, I cannot support the confirmation of any new commissioner while the independent investigation is pending.

I look forward to your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Joseph C. Lorigo", is written over the printed name.

Joseph C. Lorigo