



ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER  
HON. STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW

November 24, 2020

Hon. Timothy Howard  
Erie County Sheriff's Office  
10 Delaware Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14202

**RE: County Executive Security Detail**

Dear Sheriff Howard,

It is believed that County Executive Mark Poloncarz is once again being protected by an armed security detail of Erie County Sheriff's Deputies. The last time the Erie County Executive requested and was provided a 24-hour a day, seven-day a week security detail, the cost of your office providing armed deputies was \$1,775 a day. This cost estimate came directly from your administration at the time. Based on the number of days and holidays that Mr. Poloncarz utilized a round-the-clock, armed security detail, the total cost in August 2019 was \$213,000.

With the reported return of an armed security detail along with Sheriff's Deputies driving Mr. Poloncarz, my office has questions about this expense, including:

- Is Mr. Poloncarz once again using armed security at this time?
- If so, when was the security detail assigned and who requested it?
- What is the cost associated with the specific detail that he has been assigned?
- If Sheriff's Deputies are guarding Mr. Poloncarz on Thanksgiving or other government holidays, what is the rate of pay?
- Will deputies be paid overtime or double time or triple time to guard Mr. Poloncarz on government holidays like Thanksgiving?
- Will the officers assigned to Mr. Poloncarz's security detail be working around the clock like last time, 24-hours a day, seven-days a week?
- Should the Erie County Executive's campaign pay for any sheriff's deputies offering protection for political events?

In April 2019, Mr. Poloncarz misled you and the public on the need for a personal security detail to begin with, not being entirely truthful of a reported incident was not that at all.

The Erie County Executive falsely claimed he received a "suspicious" package in the mail that required personal security protection. What the County Executive did not know at that time was that the very same "suspicious" package was also mailed to members of the media, it was nothing more than a family requesting assistance in a child custody case.

"Once the sheriff's department determined the one (package) he (Poloncarz) received contained nothing dangerous, it was turned over to his (Poloncarz) staff to review.

Source: [www.wgrz.com](http://www.wgrz.com), "Brother and Sister Believe Package That Caused Concern for Poloncarz Came From Them,"  
4/4/19

There was no threat or danger to the County Executive at all, however the incident was connected to his request for a security detail, costing taxpayers \$213,000 in protection costs.

A public claim was also made in broadcast reports that an alleged incident near the County Executive's home also prompted the request for a security detail at taxpayer's expense. Keep in mind, this information is in the public domain and nothing being discussed in this letter is considered confidential. There is zero concrete evidence or proof the below incident had anything to do with Mr. Poloncarz at all, yet he used it to justify taxpayer funded security:

"The discovery of a knife near the sidewalk outside his (Poloncarz) home where a 'tree had been stabbed' according to a police report."

Source: [www.wgrz.com](http://www.wgrz.com), Ethics Board Asked to Study Use of Poloncarz Security Detail, 8/28/19

Because an armed security detail is costly and paid for by taxpayers, it is prudent that we report these costs, and ensure the service is a necessity. There is also a concern based on previous behavior that taxpayers will be on the hook to provide security for the County Executive when he attends political events, like the time Sheriff's Deputies drove a taxpayer funded vehicle while Mr. Poloncarz marched in Fourth of July parades with campaign volunteers.

"When you have people wearing 'Poloncarz 2019' T-shirts and carrying banners, that is a campaign activity."

Source: Erie County Legislator Ed Rath, [www.wgrz.com](http://www.wgrz.com), Ethics Board Asked to Study Use of Poloncarz Security Detail,  
8/28/19

For the record and as you are well aware, I sent you a copy of an actual threat I received from an Erie County Holding Center Inmate many years ago. Your office placed me on a victim notification list any time this individual entered or left your custody. I did not pursue criminal charges nor did I request a personal security detail. My "threat" unlike the County Executive's, was real. At my own expense I obtained a concealed carry permit and carry a firearm where I am legally allowed to do so. I also did not request a taxpayer funded security detail this past summer when private information about my home was shared all over social media. While my wife and children left our home temporarily as a precaution, I would never ask taxpayers to pay for my personal protection.

As always, I thank you for your willingness to work with my office on behalf of taxpayers. I look forward to reviewing the answers provided to my questions.

Sincerely,



STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW, JR.  
Erie County Comptroller