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ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER

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COMPTROLLER CALLS FOR TAX CUTS AND ROAD REPAIRS WHEN \$180 MILLION IN STIMULUS FUNDS ARRIVE

Critical of Poloncarz's 2020 spending practices, Comptroller Mychajliw believes taxpayers deserve a property tax cut and repairs of Erie County's dilapidated infrastructure

(ERIE COUNTY, NY) – Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw, Jr. is calling on the Poloncarz Administration and Erie County Legislators to establish a comprehensive plan on how to best utilize the second round of an estimated \$180 million (\$178.18 million) in stimulus funding. This comes after Congress today passed the \$1.9 trillion COVID relief package that the U.S. Senate approved in a party-line vote this past Saturday. Comptroller Mychajliw calls for a property tax cut and an investment in rebuilding roads and bridges.

"Politicians never met a dollar they didn't like to spend. This revenue belongs to hard working taxpayers, not the government. The Poloncarz administration should not create a \$180 million slush fund to spend how they wish. I strongly suggest a property tax cut to support struggling families and businesses. We should also create a comprehensive plan to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure. Keep this revenue out of the hands of politicians and give it back to the people that paid the bill in the first place: taxpayers," said Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw.

Erie County received \$160 million in CARES Act funds in 2020 to be used only on pandemic-related expenses. Unfortunately, nearly \$6 million of that was spent on overtime for county workers. Political appointees accounted for 22.1% of that, although they make up only 6.5% of the county workforce. The Administration spent nearly \$240,000 on food.

The County Comptroller recommends restoring true checks and balances by a return to proper purchasing procedures and request for proposal rules in determining how this next round of relief dollars are spent.

"The Erie County Legislature must have true oversight on how tax dollars are spent. While Mark Poloncarz rules like a king, our county government is not a monarchy. Look no further than the disaster New York State government is because Governor Cuomo rules like a dictator with zero checks and balances. The Legislature must restore their power of holding the Erie County Executive accountable. This includes vetting the proposed use of the COVID funds, as well as voting on whether to approve the spending," said Comptroller Mychajliw.

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The latest COVID relief package calls for New York State to receive \$23.5 billion in aid and would allow communities up until 2024 to spend their allocation. In 2020 Erie County saw a 61.21% drop in bed tax (more than \$7 million), and a 2.66% drop in sales tax revenue (\$13 million).

“Even without this influx of a projected \$180 million for Erie County government, the Poloncarz Administration created a \$100,000 political patronage job with a \$22,000 raise using 2020 CARES Act funds. The politically connected made tens of thousands of dollars in overtime. The Health Commissioner racked up \$183,000 in overtime. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent on pizza, chicken wings, pots and pans and raw pork. This gluttonous spending took place when times were supposedly tight. I cannot imagine how Mark Poloncarz will spend, with zero checks and balances, a slush fund of \$180 million,” added Comptroller Mychajliw.

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