



ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER MARK POLONCARZ

Your Independent Taxpayer Watchdog

Biography



Mark Poloncarz is Erie County's eleventh (11th) comptroller and only the fifth (5th) elected comptroller since the office was made elective in 1961. In that capacity, he acts as Erie County's Chief Fiscal Officer, Chief Accounting and Reporting Officer, and Chief Auditing Officer.

Mark was born on November 7, 1967 to Charles and Janice Poloncarz, each now retired as a steelworker and nurse from Bethlehem Steel Corp. and Mercy Hospital, respectively. The eldest of three sons, Mark grew up with his parents and younger brothers Robb and Kevin in the blue-collar steel town of Lackawanna, New York. Mark graduated as a National Honor Society Member and Regents scholar from Lackawanna Senior High School in 1985 and received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1989. After working in the private sector for five years, Mark decided to study law at the University of Toledo College of Law and graduated in 1997. During his final year of law school, Mark won the

University of Toledo's moot court competition and received the prestigious "Barrister" award honoring his accomplishment.

Passing the New York State Bar exam on his first attempt, Mark then practiced corporate and finance law in Buffalo, New York and was last associated with the firm of Kavinoky Cook LLP. His legal practice included representing businesses, both large and small, and local governmental authorities during complex public and private mixed finance transactions.

Since taking office on January 1, 2006 during the height of the 'Red-Green' fiscal crisis, as Erie County Comptroller, Mark has dedicated his administration towards creating a more efficient comptroller's office and restoring fiscal stability to Erie County's government. He has released more financial statements and reports than any of his predecessors, including, for the first time, the issuing of comprehensive and detailed quarterly reports on Erie County's finances. Quarterly reports on financial conditions are standard in the private sector and have become the norm in Erie County during Mark's term in office. These reports have helped the county executive, legislature, Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority and Wall Street better understand the issues facing Erie County.

Additionally, Mark has strengthened the office's Audit Division, which has conducted more than 50 major audits and reviews of Erie County's departments, related entities and issues facing residents, which have identified more than \$27 million in cost savings. He has shaped the Audit Division into an *Inspector General-style* organization that stops and prevents waste, fraud and abuse of county taxpayers' dollars, and was honored by the [Association of Local Government Auditors](#) with their prestigious Bronze Knighton Award for small audit departments in 2007. This was the first Knighton Award ever received by a municipal government auditor in New York State.

Under Mark's watch, Erie County's credit rating has increased 4 steps (from the lowest investment grade rating of Baa3) to the current rating of A2, the highest rating Erie County has had since 2001, while the state-appointed control board downgraded in status from "control" to "advisory."

While Mark has acted as the taxpayers' watchdog and called out wasteful spending and irresponsible actions, he has also worked collaboratively and cooperatively with the county executive, legislature, and the Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority in order to restore fiscal discipline to county government.