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ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER

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COMPTROLLER ISSUES REPORT ON WHAT YOU WOULD LOSE BY DEFUNDING SHERIFF’S OFFICE

Report shows impact Sheriff’s Office has in community

(ERIE COUNTY, NY) – With calls across the country to “defund police,” and the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota taking a formal vote to do so, Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw provided a report to the Erie County Legislature today showing the negative consequences if that became reality here. The office of Erie County Comptroller’s report shows many functions of the Erie County Sheriff’s Office in the community. The report shows funding spent on local law enforcement goes much farther than maintaining and operating two jails and road patrols.

“The radical left want lawlessness. Lawlessness is what will come to the doors of law-abiding taxpayers. Defunding police is insane. No cops on the street is exactly what these anarchists want. This report gives people a better understanding of how this dangerous and potentially deadly idea would negatively impact families across Erie County.”

“By defunding police, Legislators would choose criminals over cops. They would effectively eliminate police protection for Erie County. Now more than ever, this report helps Legislators understand the devastating consequences of approving something so radical here,” said Comptroller Mychajliw.

In addition to maintaining and operating two jails in Erie County, the report shows the many services provided by the Sheriff’s Office, including, but not limited to:

- Provide 24-hour a day, seven days a week road patrol in seven districts, which includes Clarence, Grand Island, Springville, Elma, Alden, Colden and North Collins, as well as neighboring towns, protecting towns that do not have their own police force.
- Respond to nearly 100,000 emergency calls for police assistance, including investigations of domestic violence, rape, burglary, gang related activity, narcotics, and motor vehicle accidents
- Human/Sex trafficking unit
- Bomb and explosive device removal

- DWI enforcement
- Car crash investigations
- Educational programs for inmates, including GED, literacy, job training and resume building programs
- Warrant enforcement, including the arrest of "deadbeat dads" that do not pay child support
- Arson investigators
- Marine patrol of local waterways
- Aerial patrol, including gorge/ravine rescues
- Car seat safety checks
- K-9 Unit
- Yellow Dot program to protect seniors
- Security for Rath Building and County operated buildings
- Traffic patrol outside New Era Field

"What do those that want to defund police tell rape victims about justice when there's no law enforcement to investigate that heinous crime. What happens when law enforcement isn't there to collect a rape kit or test DNA to catch criminals? What about the victims of domestic violence? Who can they call if there's no one answering the phone at Central Police Services, and there isn't a road patrol car to send? Legislators have a choice: support law and order and fight for crime victims, or side with criminals and anarchy," said Comptroller Mychajliw.

The Comptroller's report also points to the role of the Sheriff's Office in combating human trafficking. Through a Department of Justice grant they are the lead local law enforcement agency, partnering with community organizations to address this very serious issue in our country and community.

"If the Legislature defunds police, they're giving a 'green light' to sex traffickers in Erie County. The Sheriff's Office is uniquely trained and qualified to address some of these serious crimes against women and children," said Comptroller Mychajliw. "They are tackling tough problems that harm our communities. They protect our most vulnerable."

The Sheriff's Office also works collaboratively with Central Police Services to pursue suspects and put those that commit crimes behind bars. Through DNA testing and firearm ID, their analysis, training and expertise leads to the resolution of many crimes being solved.

"Think of the importance DNA played in solving the Bike Path Rapist case," added Comptroller Mychajliw. "So many women lived with the horror for so long. The suspect raped, tortured, and killed for years. Women couldn't leave their homes without being afraid. Thanks to the efforts of the Sheriff's investigators and numerous police agencies at the local, state and federal levels, working with the lab, the suspect was caught and convicted."

"All of these Sheriff's Office functions show just who would be harmed the most by defunding police departments," said Comptroller Mychajliw. "The victims of domestic violence and human trafficking, those who are abused, fall into the trappings of drug abuse or whose lives are

threatened. That's who the Legislature would ultimately hurt. Not to mention the great community work that agencies like the Sheriff's Office do to help build goodwill and trust in the community. "

Members of the Erie County SWAT team serve all police agencies in the County as requested. If there is a potential bomb or suspicious package or device, it is the Erie County Sheriff's SWAT team that investigates and safely removes it. Without them, there is no group of countywide law enforcement experts able to handle potential explosives.

In addition to working with community partners in grant-funded efforts, there are a number of initiatives involving the Sheriff's Office and other government entities, like the GIVE initiative (Gun Involved Violence Elimination), working with law enforcement at all levels to address violent street crime, and keep illegal guns, drugs and gangs off the street.

The Crash Investigation Unit pursues punishment of drunk drivers through their DWI enforcement efforts, and investigates the facts surrounding car crashes. The Arson Investigation Unit brings their expertise to the scene of a fire, to ensure those responsible are arrested.

Sheriff's Office members help to take prescription or dangerous drugs off the street with their prescription drop-off program. In addition, the narcotics detectives are responsible for investigating drug trafficking in our community, an issue that has led to widespread drug use, and has become an epidemic that is taking so many young people's lives.

The Sheriff's Office is also involved in many community outreach efforts that have a positive impact on seniors, children and families. The "Yellow Dot" program helps seniors and provides guidance to first responders taking care of a patient at an accident scene. That program was initiated through the Sheriff's office. They also provide car seat safety checks, giving parents certainty and peace of mind that their children are safely buckled in.

"As a parent of two baby boys, that gives my family peace of mind, knowing our car seats are properly installed and our kids are safe," said Comptroller Mychajliw.

The Sheriff's Office also works with those convicted of crimes, helping to rehabilitate inmates housed in the Erie County jail and providing them a fresh start once released.

"Many of the positive programs operated by the Office of Erie County Sheriff support the inmates in our jails. Detainees receive educational, religious, life skill and job training and GED programs while behind bars to help better prepare them for when they are released. Without the Sheriff's Office, these programs that jail management has developed over the years may not be in place. Those behind bars would have less opportunity at a second chance," said Comptroller Mychajliw.

Comptroller Mychajliw provided the report to the Legislature to provide guidance as the discussion of defunding police departments intensifies.

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