

ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE



92 Franklin Street
Buffalo, New York 14202

July 19, 2022

Hon. April McCants-Baskin
Chairwoman of the Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street, Fourth Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

RE: Request for additional discussion(s) on proposed Opioid Settlement Plan

Dear Chairwoman Baskin:

This letter is to notify you that our Caucus will separate Comm. 13E-31 (2022), Opioid Settlement, from the Health and Human Services Committee Report and move to send it back to committee for further discussion. This item is the administration's proposal on spending a more than \$63 million settlement received as a result of a legal settlement with opioid manufactures. The funding represents a massive infusion of one-time, non-recurring, revenue for Erie County with most of it restricted for the use of addressing the opioid epidemic.

Our caucus received the administration's plan details on 3:38pm on Wednesday, July 13th and was asked to vote on it at 9:30am the next day in the scheduled Health and Human Services Committee. This is not an acceptable amount of time for any legislator to perform proper due diligence on a plan to spend \$63 million on an issue as important as the opioid epidemic. There also does not appear to be any urgency to hastily approve this resolution before our summer recess. According to the Budget Director's testimony, the county has only received approximately \$3.5 million of the \$19.2 million we are expected to receive in 2022. This represents 18.2% of the 2022 funding and less than 6% of the total anticipated funds. Simply put, we have time to have a real discussion about how best to spend these funds to combat the opioid epidemic which has impacted all eleven of our districts.

We believe, that together, we should craft the legislature's plan for spending the opioid settlement. We believe that plan should be crafted in concert with community partners whose mission is dedicated to this very issue. We will move to send the item back to committee, in hopes that the Legislature will convene a public meeting/hearing that allows community organizations, focused on the mission of treating drug addiction and combating the opioid epidemic, an opportunity to make a presentation to us on their belief on the most effective use of these funds.

We have so many experts in our community on this topic. They do good work in all of our districts on a daily basis and they are truly the warriors on the front line of this crisis. We owe it to them and our constituents to bring them into the conversation. We owe it to those who have suffered, are suffering, or have lost their battle with the disease of addiction to ensure we get this right.

Sincerely,



FRANK J. TODARO
Legislator, District 8



JOSEPH C. LORIGO
Minority Leader
Legislator, District 10



CHRISTOPHER C. GREENE
Legislator, District 6



JOHN J. MILLS
Legislator, District 11